WINNING HIS WAY

BY

CHARLES CARLETON COFFIN

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BY

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WINNING HIS WAY.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST YEARS.

MANY years ago, before railroads were thought of, a company of Connecticut farmers, who had heard marvellous stories of the richness of the land in the West, sold their farms, packed up their goods, bade adieu to their friends, and with their families started for Ohio.

After weeks of travel over dusty roads, they came to a beautiful valley, watered by a winding river. The hills around were fair and sunny. There were groves of oaks, and maples, and lindens. The air was fragrant with honeysuckle and jasmine. There was plenty of game. The swift-footed deer browsed the tender grass upon the hills. Squirrels chattered in the trees and the ringdoves cooed in the depths of the forest. The place was so fertile and

fair, so pleasant and peaceful, that the emigrants made it their home, and called it New Hope.

They built a mill upon the river. They laid out a wide, level street, and a public square, erected a school-house, and then a church. One of their number opened a store. Other settlers came, and, as the years passed by, the village rang with the shouts of children pouring from the school-house for a frolic upon the square. Glorious times they had beneath the oaks and maples.

One of the jolliest of the boys was Paul Parker, only son of Widow Parker, who lived in a little old house, shaded by a great maple, on the outskirts of the village. Her husband died when Paul was in his cradle. Paul's grandfather was still living. The people called him "Old Pensioner Parker," for he fought at Bunker Hill, and received a pension from government. He was hale and hearty, though more than eighty years of age.

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The pension was the main support of the family. They kept a cow, a pig, turkeys, and chickens, and, by selling milk and eggs, which Paul carried to their customers, they brought the years round without running in debt. Paul's pantaloons had a patch on each

knee, but he laughed just as loud and whistled just as cheerily for all that.

In summer he went barefoot. He did not have to turn out at every mud-puddle, and he could plash into the mill-pond and give the frogs a crack over the head without stopping to take off stockings and shoes. Paul did not often have a dinner of roast beef, but he had an abundance of bean porridge, brown bread, and milk.

"Bean porridge is wholesome food, Paul," said his grandfather. "When I was a boy we used to say, —

> 'Bean porridge hot,
> Bean porridge cold, —
> Bean porridge best
> Nine days old.'

The wood-choppers in winter used to freeze it into cakes and carry it into the woods. Many a time I have made a good dinner on a chunk of frozen porridge."

The Pensioner remembered what took place in his early years, but he lost his reckoning many times a day upon what was going on in the town. He loved to tell stories, and Paul was a willing listener. Pleasant winter-evenings they had in the old kitchen,

the hickory logs blazing on the hearth, the tea-kettle singing through its nose, the clock ticking soberly, the old Pensioner smoking his pipe in the arm-chair, Paul's mother knitting, — Bruno by Paul's side, wagging his tail and watching Muff in the opposite corner rolling her great round yellow eyes. Bruno was always ready to give Muff battle whenever Paul tipped him the wink to pitch in.

The Pensioner's stories were of his boyhood, — how he joined the army, and fought the battles of the Revolution. Thus his story ran.

"I was only a little bigger than you are, Paul," he said, "when the red-coats began the war at Lexington. I lived in old Connecticut then; that was a long time before we came out here. The meeting-house bell rung, and the people blew their dinner-horns, till the whole town was alarmed. I ran up to the meeting-house and found the militia forming. The men had their guns and powder-horns. The women were at work melting their pewter porringers into bullets. I was n't o'd enough to train, but I could fire a gun and bring down a squirrel from the top of a tree. I wanted to go and help drive the red-coats into the ocean. I asked mother

if I might. I was afraid that she did n't want me to go. 'Why, Paul,' says she, 'you have n't any clothes.' 'Mother,' says I, 'I can shoot a red-coat just as well as any of the men can.' Says she, 'Do you want to go, Paul?' 'Yes, mother.' 'Then you shall go; I 'll fix you out,' she said. As I had n't any coat she took a meal-bag, cut a hole for my head in the bottom, and made holes for my arms in the sides, cut off a pair of her own stocking-legs, and sewed them on for sleeves, and I was rigged. I took the old gun which father carried at Ticonderoga, and the powder-horn, and started. There is the gun and the horn, Paul, hanging up over the fireplace.

"The red-coats had got back to Boston, but we cooped them up. Our company was in Colonel Knowlton's regiment. I carried the flag, which said, *Qui transtulit sustinet.* I don't know anything about Latin, but those who do say it means that God who hath transported us hither will sustain us; and that is true, Paul. He sustained us at Bunker Hill, and we should have held it if our powder had not given out. Our regiment was by a rail-fence on the northeast side of the hill. Stark,

with his New Hampshire boys, was by the river. Prescott was in the redoubt on the top of the hill. Old Put kept walking up and down the lines. This is the way it was, Paul."

The Pensioner laid aside his pipe, bent forward, and traced upon the hearth the positions of the troops.

"There is the redoubt; here is the rail-fence; there is where the red-coats formed their lines. They came up in front of us here. We did n't fire a gun till they got close to us. I 'll show you how the fire ran down the line."

He took down the horn, pulled out the stopper, held his finger over the tip, and made a trail of powder.

"There, Paul, that is by the fence. As the red-coats came up, some of us began to be uneasy and wanted to fire; but Old Put kept saying, 'Don't fire yet! Wait till you can see the white of their eyes! Aim at their belts!'"

While the Pensioner was saying this, he took the tongs and picked a live coal from the fire.

"They came up beautifully, Paul, — the tall grenadiers and light-infantry in their scarlet coats, and the sun shining on their gun-barrels and bayonets. They

wer'n't more than ten rods off when a soldier on top of the hill could n't stand it any longer. Pop! went his gun, and the fire ran down the hill quicker than scat! just like this!"

He touched the coal to the powder. There was a flash, a puff of smoke rising to the ceiling, and filling the room.

"Hooray!" shouted Paul, springing to his feet. Muff went with a jump upon the bureau in the corner of the room, her tail as big as Paul's arm, and her back up. Bruno was after her in a twinkling, bouncing about, barking, and looking round to Paul to see if it was all right.

"There, grandpa, you have made a great smut on the hearth," said Mrs. Parker, who kept her house neat and tidy, though it was a crazy old affair.

"Well, mother, I thought it would please Paul."

"S-s-s-s-si'c!" Paul made a hiss which Bruno understood, for he went at Muff more fiercely. It was glorious to see Muff spit fire, and hear her growl low and deep like distant thunder. Paul would not have Muff hurt for anything, but he loved to see Bruno show his teeth at her, for she was gritty when waked up.

"Be still, Paul, and let Muff alone," said Paul's mother.

"Come, Bruno, she ain't worth minding," said Paul.

"They have got good courage, both of 'em," said the Pensioner; "and courage is one half of the battle, and truth and honor is the other half. Paul, I want you to remember that. It will be worth more than a fortune to you. I don't mean that cats and dogs know much about truth and honor, and I have seen some men who did n't know much more about those qualities of character than Muff and Bruno; but what I have said, Paul, is true for all that. They who win success in life are those who love truth, and who follow what is noble and good. No matter how brave a man may be, if he has n't these qualities he won't succeed. He may get rich, but that won't amount to much. Success, Paul, is to have an unblemished character, — to be true to ourselves, to our country, and to God."

He went on with his story, telling how the British troops ran before the fire of the Yankees, — how they re-formed and came on a second time, and were repulsed again, — how General Clinton went

over from Boston with reinforcements, — how Charlestown was set on fire, — how the flames leaped from house to house, and curled round the spire of the church, — how the red-coats advanced a third time beneath the great black clouds of smoke, — how the ammunition of the Yankees gave out, and they were obliged to retreat, — how General Putnam tried to rally them, — how they escaped across Charlestown Neck, where the cannon-balls from the British floating batteries raked the ranks! He made it all so plain, that Paul wished he had been there.

The story completed, Paul climbed the creaking stairway to his narrow chamber, repeated his evening prayer, and scrambled into bed.

"He is a jolly boy," said the Pensioner to Paul's mother, as Paul left the room.

"I don't know what will become of him," she replied, "he is so wild and thoughtless. He leaves the door open, throws his cap into the corner, sets Bruno and Muff to growling, stops to play on his way home from school, sings, whistles, shouts, hurrahs, and tears round like all possessed."

If she could have looked into Paul's desk at school, she would have found whirligigs, tops, pin

boxes, nails, and no end of strings and dancing dandy-jims.

"Paul is a rogue," said the Pensioner. "You remember how he got on top of the house awhile ago and frightened us out of our wits by shouting 'Fire! fire!' down the chimney; how we ran out to see about it; how I asked him 'Where?' and says he, 'Down there in the fireplace, grandpa.' He is a chip of the old block. I used to do just so. But there is one good thing about him, he don't do mean tricks. He don't bend up pins and put them in the boys' seats, or tuck chestnut-burs into the girls' hoods. I never knew him to tell a lie. He will come out all right."

"I hope so," said Mrs. Parker.

Paul could look through the crevices between the shingles, and the cracks in the walls, and behold the stars gleaming from the unfathomable spaces. He wondered how far they were away. He listened to the wind chanting a solemn dirge, filling his soul with longings for he knew not what. He thought over his grandfather's stories, and the words he had spoken about courage, truth, and honor, till a shingle clattering in the wind took up the refrain, and

seemed to say, Truth and honor, — truth and honor, — truth and honor, — so steadily and pleasantly, that while he listened the stars faded from his sight, and he sailed away into dream-land.

Paul was twelve years old, stout, hearty, and healthy, — full of life, and brimming over with fun. Once he set the village in a roar. The people permitted their pigs to run at large. The great maple in front of the Pensioner's house was cool and shady, — a delightful place for the pigs through the hot summer days.

Mr. Chrome, the carriage-painter, lived across the road. He painted a great many wagons for the farmers, — the wheels yellow, the bodies blue, green, or red, with scrolls and flowers on the sides. Paul watched him by the hour, and sometimes made up his mind to be a carriage-painter when he became a man.

"Mr. Chrome," said Paul, "don't you think that those pigs would look better if they were painted?"

"Perhaps so."

"I should like to see how they would look painted as you paint your wagons."

Mr. Chrome laughed at the ludicrous fancy. He

loved fun, and was ready to help carry out the freak.

"Well, just try your hand on improving nature," he said.

Paul went to work. Knowing that pigs like to have their backs scratched, he had no difficulty in keeping them quiet. To one he gave green legs, blue ears, red rings round its eyes, and a red tail. Another had one red leg, one blue, one yellow, one green, with red and blue stripes and yellow stars on its body. "I will make him a star-spangled pig," Paul shouted to Mr. Chrome. Another had a green head, yellow ears, and a red body. Bruno watched the proceedings, wagging his tail, looking now at Paul and then at the pigs, ready to help on the fun.

"Si'c! — si'c! — si'c!" said Paul. Bruno was upon them with a bound. Away they capered, with him at their heels. As soon as they came into the sunshine the spirits of turpentine in the paint was like fire to their flesh. Faster they ran up the street squealing, with Bruno barking behind. Mr. Chrome laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. All the dogs, great and small, joined Bruno in chase of the strange game. People came out from the stores,

windows were thrown up, and all hands — men, women and children — ran to see what was the matter, laughing and shouting, while the pigs and dogs ran round the square.

"Paul Parker did that, I 'll bet," said Mr. Leatherby, the shoemaker, peeping out from his shop. "It is just like him."

An old white horse, belonging to Mr. Smith, also sought the shade of the maple before the Pensioner's house. Bruno barked at him by the hour, but the old horse would not move for anything short of a club or stone.

"I 'll see if I can't get rid of him," said Paul to himself.

He went into the barn, found a piece of rope, tied up a little bundle of hay, got a stick five or six feet long, and some old harness-straps. In the evening, when it was so dark that people could not see what he was up to, he caught the old horse, laid the stick between his ears and strapped it to his neck, and tied the hay to the end of the stick, in such a way that it hung a few inches beyond old Whitey's nose. The old horse took a step ahead to nibble the hay, — another, — another, — another! "Don't you wish

you may get it?" said Paul. Tramp, — tramp, — tramp. Old Whitey went down the road. Paul heard him go across the bridge by the mill, and up the hill the other side of the brook.

"Go it, old fellow!" he shouted, then listened again. It was a calm night, and he could just hear old Whitey's feet, — tramp, — tramp, — tramp.

The next morning the good people of Fairview, ten miles from New Hope, laughed to see an old white horse, with a bundle of hay a few inches beyond his nose, passing through the place.

Mr. Smith, after breakfast, started out to hunt up old Whitey. He often found him under the maple in front of the Pensioner's house. Paul was swinging on the gate. "Have you seen my horse?" Mr. Smith asked.

"Yes, sir, I saw him going down towards the bridge last evening," Paul replied, chuckling to himself.

Mr. Smith went down to the mill and inquired. The miller heard a horse go over the bridge. The farmer on the other side heard a horse go up the hill. Mr. Smith looked at the tracks. They were old Whitey's, who had a broken shoe on his left hind foot. He followed on. "I never knew him to go

away before," he said to himself, as he walked hour after hour, seeing the tracks all the way to Fairview.

"Have you seen a white horse about here?" he asked of one of the villagers.

"Yes, sir; there was one here this morning trying to overtake a bundle of hay," the man replied, laughing. "There he is now!" he added.

Mr. Smith looked up and saw old Whitey, who had turned about, and was reaching forward to get a nibble of the hay. Mr. Smith felt like being angry, but the old horse was walking so soberly and earnestly that he could n't help laughing.

"That is some of Paul's doings, I know. I 'll give him a blessing when I get back."

It was noon before Mr. Smith reached New Hope. Paul and Bruno were sitting beneath the maple.

"Where did you find old Whitey?" Paul asked.

"You was the one who did it, you little rascal!"

"Did what?"

"You know what. You have made me walk clear to Fairview. I have a mind to horsewhip you."

Paul laughed to think that the old horse had tramped so far, though he was sorry that Mr. Smith had been obliged to walk that distance.

"I did n't mean any harm, Mr. Smith; but old Whitey has made our dooryard his stamping-place all summer, and I thought I would see if I could get rid of him."

"Well, sir, if you do it again I 'll trounce you!" said Mr. Smith as he rode away, his anger coming up.

"Would n't it be better for you to put him in a pasture, Mr. Smith? Then he would n't trouble us," said Paul, who knew that Mr. Smith had no right to let old Whitey run at large. Paul was not easily frightened when he had right on his side. The people in the stores and at the tavern had a hearty laugh when they heard how old Whitey went to Fairview.

Mr. Cipher taught the village school. He was tall, slim, thin-faced, with black eyes deeply set in his head, and a long, hooked nose like an eagle's bill. He wore a loose swallow-tailed coat with bright brass buttons, and pants which were several inches too short. The Committee employed him, not because he was a superior teacher, but they could get him for twelve dollars a month, while Mr. Rudiment, who had been through college, and who was known to be an excellent instructor, asked sixteen.

There was a crowd of roistering boys and rosy-cheeked girls, who made the old school-house hum like a beehive. Very pleasant to the passers-by was the music of their voices. At recess and at noon they had leap-frog and tag. Paul was in a class with Philip Funk, Hans Middlekauf, and Michael Murphy. There were other boys and girls of all nationalities. Paul's ancestors were from Connecticut, while Philip's father was a Virginian. Hans was born in Germany, and Michael in Ireland. Philip's father kept a grocery, and sold sugar, molasses, tobacco, and whiskey. He was rich, and Philip wore good clothes and calf-skin boots. Paul could get his lessons very quick whenever he set about them in earnest, but he spent half his time in inventing fly-traps, making whirligigs, or drawing pictures on his slate. He had an accurate eye, and could draw admirably. Philip could get his lessons also if he chose to apply himself, but it was a great deal easier to have some one work out the problems in arithmetic than to do them himself.

"Here, Paul, just help me; that is a good fellow," he said, coaxingly.

It was at recess.

"No; Cipher has forbid it. Each one must do his own work," said Paul.

"If you will do it, I will give you a handful of raisins," said Philip, who usually had his pockets full of raisins, candy, or nuts.

"It would n't be right."

"Come, just do this one; Cipher never will know it."

"No!" Paul said it resolutely.

"You are a mean, sneaking fellow," said Philip.

Philip was a year older than Paul. He had sandy hair, white eyelashes, and a freckled face. He carried a watch, and always had money in his pocket. Paul, on the other hand, hardly ever had a cent which he could call his own. His clothes were worn till they were almost past mending.

"Rag-tag has got a hole in his trousers," said Philip to the other boys.

Paul's face flushed. He wanted to knock Philip's teeth down his throat. He knew that his mother had hard work to clothe him, and felt the insult keenly. He went into the school-house, choked his anger down, and tried to forget all about it by drawing a picture of the master. It was an excellent likeness,

— his spindle legs, great feet, short pants, loose coat, sunken eyes, hooked nose, thin face, and long bony fingers.

Philip sat behind Paul. Instead of studying his lesson, he was planning how to get Paul into trouble. He saw the picture. Now was his time. He giggled aloud. Mr. Cipher looked up in astonishment.

"What are you laughing at, Master Funk?"

"At what Paul is doing."

Paul hustled his slate into his desk.

"Let me see what you have here," said Cipher, walking up to Paul, who spat on his fingers, and ran his hand into the desk, to rub out the drawing; but he felt that it would be better to meet his punishment boldly than to have the school think he was a sneak. He laid the slate before the master without a line effaced.

"Giving your attention to drawing, are you, Master Paul?" said Cipher. His eyes flashed. He knit his brows. The blood rushed to his cheeks. There was a popping up of heads all over the school-room to get a sight of the picture.

The boys laughed aloud, and there was a tittering among the girls, which made Cipher very angry

"Silence!" he roared, and stamped upon the floor so savagely that the windows rattled. "Come out here, sir. I'll give you a drawing-lesson of another sort." He seized Paul by the collar, and threw him into the space in front of his own desk. "Hold out your hand."

Paul felt that he was about to receive a tremendous thrashing; but he determined that he would not flinch. He held out his right hand, and received the blow from a heavy ferule. His hand felt as if he had been struck by a piece of hot iron.

"The other, sir."

Whack! it fell, a blow which made the flesh purple. There was an Oh! upon his tongue; but he set his teeth together, and bit his lips till they bled, and so smothered it. Another blow, — another, — another. They were hard to bear; but his teeth were set like a vice. There was a twitching of the muscles round his lips; he was pale. When the blows fell, he held his breath, but did not snivel.

"I'll see if I can't bring you to your feeling, you good-for-nothing scapegrace," said the master, mad with passion, and surprised that Paul made no outcry. He gave another round, bringing the ferule down with

great force. Blood began to ooze from the pores. The last blow spattered the drops around the room Cipher came to his senses. He stopped.

"Are you sorry, sir?"

"I don't know whether I am or not. I did n't mean any harm. I suppose I ought not to have drawn it in school; but I did n't do it to make fun. I drew you just as you are," said Paul, — his voice trembling a little in spite of his efforts to control it.

The master could not deny that it was a perfect likeness. He was surprised at Paul's cleverness at drawing, and for the first time in his life saw that he cut a ridiculous figure wearing that long, loose, swallow-tailed coat, with great, flaming brass buttons, and resolved upon the spot that his next coat should be a frock, and that he would get a longer pair of pants.

"You may take your seat, sir!" he said, puzzled to know whether to punish Paul still more, and compel him to say that he was sorry, or whether to accept the explanations, and apologize for whipping him so severely.

Paul sat down. His hands ached terribly; but what troubled him most was the thought that he had been whipped before the whole school. All the girls

had witnessed his humiliation. There was one among them, — Azalia Adams, — who stood at the head of Paul's class, the best reader and speller in school. She had ruby lips, and cheeks like roses ; the golden sunlight falling upon her chestnut hair crowned her with glory ; deep, thoughtful, and earnest was the liquid light of her hazel eyes ; she was as lovely and beautiful as the flower whose name she bore. Paul had drawn her picture many times, — sometimes bending over her task, sometimes as she sat, unmindful of the hum of voices around her, looking far away into a dim and distant dream-land. He never wearied of tracing the features of one so fair and good as she. Her laugh was as musical as a mountain-brook ; and in the church on Sunday, when he heard her voice sweetly and melodiously mingling with the choir, he thought of the angels, — of her as in heaven and he on earth.

"Run home, sonny, and tell your marm that you got a licking," said Philip when school was out.

Paul's face became livid. He would have doubled his fist and given Philip a blow in the face, but his palms were like puff-balls. There was an ugly feeling inside, but just then a pair of bright hazel eyes,

almost swimming with tears, looked into his own. "Don't mind it, Paul!" said Azalia.

The pain was not half so hard to bear after that. He wanted to say, "I thank you," but did not know how. Till then his lips had hardly quivered, and he had not shed a tear; now his eyes became moist; one great drop rolled down his cheek, but he wiped it off with his coat-sleeve, and turned away, for fear that Azalia would think him a baby.

On his way home the thought uppermost in his mind was, "What will mother say?" Why tell her? Would it not be better to keep the matter to himself? But then he remembered that she had said, "Paul, I shall expect you to tell me truthfully all that happens to you at school." He loved his mother. She was one of the best mothers that ever lived, working for him day and night. How could he abuse such confidence as she had given him? He would not violate it. He would not be a sneak.

His mother and the Pensionet were sitting before the fire as he entered the house. She welcomed him with a smile, — a beautiful smile it was, for she was a noble woman, and Paul was her darling, her pride, the light, joy, and comfort of her life.

"Well, Paul, how do you get on at school?" his grandfather asked.

"I got a whipping to-day." It was spoken boldly and manfully.

"What! My son got a whipping!" his mother exclaimed.

"Yes, mother."

"I am astonished. Come here, and tell me all about it."

Paul stood by her side and told the story, — how Philip Funk tried to bribe him, how he called him names, — how, having got his lessons, he made a picture of the master. "Here it is, mother." He took his slate from his little green bag. The picture had not been effaced. His mother looked at it and laughed, notwithstanding her efforts to keep sober, for it was such a perfect likeness. She had an exquisite sense of the ludicrous, and Paul was like her. She was surprised to find that he could draw so well.

"We will talk about the matter after supper," she said. She had told Paul many times, that, if he was justly punished at school, he must expect a second punishment at home; but she wanted to think awhile before deciding what to do. She was pleased to

know that her boy could not be bribed to do what his conscience told him he ought not to do, and that he was manly and truthful. She would rather follow him to the church-yard and lay him in his grave beneath the bending elms, than to have him untruthful or wicked.

The evening passed away. Paul sat before the fire, looking steadily into the coals. He was sober and thoughtful, wondering what his mother would say at last. The clock struck nine. It was his bedtime. He went and stood by her side once more. "You are not angry with me, mother, are you?"

"No, my son. I do not think that you deserved so severe a punishment. I am rejoiced to know that you are truthful, and that you despise a mean act. Be always as you have been to-night in telling the truth, and I never shall be angry with you."

He threw his arms around her neck, and gave way to tears, such as Cipher could not extort by his pounding. She gave him a good-night kiss, — so sweet that it seemed to lie upon his lips all through the night.

"God bless you, Paul," said the Pensioner.

Paul climbed the creaking stairs, and knelt with an

overflowing heart to say his evening prayer. He spoke the words earnestly when he asked God to take care of his mother and grandfather. He was very happy. He looked out through the crevices in the walls, and saw the stars and the moon flooding the landscape with silver light. There was sweet music in the air, — the merry melody of the water murmuring by the mill, the cheerful chirping of the crickets, and the lullaby of the winds, near at hand and far away, putting him in mind of the choirs on earth and the choirs in heaven. "Don't mind it, Paul!" were the words they sung, so sweetly and tenderly that for many days they rang in his ears.

CHAPTER II.

HARD TIMES.

HOW lonesome the days when dear friends leave us to return no more, whom we never shall see again on earth, who will send us no message or letter of love from the far distant land whither they have gone! It tries our hearts and brings tears to our eyes to lay them in the ground. But shall we never, never see them again? Yes, when we have taken the same journey, when we have closed our eyes on earth and opened them in heaven.

As the months rolled by, the Pensioner's eyes grew dim. He became weak and feeble. "The Pensioner won't stand it long," the people said.

He did not rise one morning when breakfast was ready.

"Come, grandpa," said Paul, opening the bedroom door and calling him; but there was no reply. He lay as if asleep; but his brow was cold, and his heart had stopped beating. He had died calmly and peacefully, and was forever at rest.

It was a sad day to Paul when he followed the body of his dear old grandfather to the grave; but when he stood by his coffin, and looked for the last time upon his grandfather's face, and saw how peaceful it was and how pleasant the smile which rested upon it, as if he was beholding beautiful scenes, — when Paul remembered how good he was, he could not feel it in his soul to say, "Come back, Grandpa"; he would be content as it was. But the days were long and dreary, and so were the nights. Many the hours which Paul passed lying awake in his bed, looking through the crevices of the poor old house, and watching the stars and the clouds as they went sailing by. So he was sailing on, and the question would come up, Whither? He listened to the water falling over the dam by the mill, and to the chirping of the crickets, and the sighing of the wind, and the church-bell tolling the hours: they were sweet, yet mournful and solemn sounds. Tears stood in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks, as he thought that he and his mother were on earth, and his father and grandfather were praising God in the heavenly choirs. But he resolved to be good, to take care of his mother, and be her comfort and joy.

Hard times came on. How to live was the great question; for now that his grandfather was gone, they could have the pension no longer. The neighbors were very kind. Sometimes Mr. Middlekauf, Hans's father, who had a great farm, left a bag of meal for them when he came into the village. There was little work for Paul to do in the village; but he kept their own garden in good trim, — the onion-bed clear of weeds, and the potatoes well hilled. Very pleasant it was to work there, where the honey-bees hummed over the beds of sage, and among his mother's flowers, and where bumble-bees dusted their yellow jackets in the hollyhocks. Swallows also built their nests under the eaves of the house, and made the days pleasant with their merry twittering.

The old Pensioner had been a land surveyor. The compass which he used was a poor thing; but he had run many lines with it through the grand old forest. One day, as Paul was weeding the onions, it occurred to him that he might become a surveyor; so he went into the house, took the compass from its case, and sat down to study it. He found his grandfather's surveying-book, and began to study that. Some parts were hard and dry; but having resolved

to master it, he was not the boy to give up a good resolution. It was not long before he found out how to run a line, how to set off angles, and how to ascertain the distance across a river or pond without measuring it. He went into the woods, and stripped great rolls of birch bark from the trees, carried them home, spread them out on the table, and plotted his lines with his dividers and ruler. He could not afford paper. He took great pleasure in making a sketch of the ground around the house, the garden, the orchard, the field, the road, and the river.

The people of New Hope had long been discussing the project of building a new road to Fairview, which would cross the pond above the mill. But there was no surveyor in the region to tell them how long the bridge must be which they would have to build.

"We will send up a kite, and thus get a string across the pond," said one of the citizens.

"I can ascertain the distance easier than that," said Paul.

Mr. Pimpleberry, the carpenter, who was to build the bridge, laughed, and looked with contempt upon him, Paul thought, because he was barefoot and had a patch on each knee.

"Have you ever measured it, Paul?" Judge Adams asked.

"No, sir; but I will do so just to let Mr. Pimpleberry see that I can do it."

He ran into the house, brought out the compass, went down to the edge of the pond, drove a small stake in the ground, set his compass over it, and sighted a small oak-tree upon the other side of the pond. It happened that the tree was exactly south from the stake; then he turned the sights of his compass so that they pointed exactly east and west. Then he took Mr. Pimpleberry's ten-foot pole, and measured out fifty feet toward the west, and drove another stake. Then he set his compass there, and took another sight at the small oak-tree across the pond. It was not south now, but several degrees east of south. Then he turned his compass so that the sights would point just the same number of degrees to the east of north.

"Now, Mr. Pimpleberry," said Paul, "I want you to stand out there, and hold your ten-foot pole just where I tell you, putting yourself in range with the stake I drove first and the tree across the pond."

Mr. Pimpleberry did as he was desired.

"Drive a stake where your pole stands," said Paul.

Mr. Pimpleberry did so.

"Now measure the distance from the one you have just driven to my first stake, and that will be the distance across the pond," said Paul.

"I don't believe it," said Mr. Pimpleberry.

"Paul is right," said Judge Adams. "I understand the principle. He has done it correctly."

The Judge was proud of him. Mr. Pimpleberry and Mr. Funk, and several other citizens, were astonished; for they had no idea that Paul could do anything of the kind. Notwithstanding Paul had given the true distance, he received no thanks from any one; yet he did n't care for that; for he had shown Mr. Pimpleberry that he could do it, and that was glory enough.

Paul loved fun as well as ever. Rare times he had at school. One windy day, a little boy, when he entered the school-room, left the door open. "Go back and shut the door," shouted Mr. Cipher, who was very irritable that morning. Another boy entered, and left it open. Mr. Cipher was angry, and spoke to the whole school: "Any one who comes in to-day and does not shut the door will get a flog-

ging. Now remember!' Being very awkward in his manners, inefficient in government, and shallow-brained and vain, he commanded very little respect from the scholars.

"Boys, there is a chance for us to have a jolly time with Cipher," said Paul at recess.

"What is it?" Hans Middlekauf asked, ready for fun of any sort. The boys gathered round, for they knew that Paul was a capital hand in inventing games.

"You remember what Cipher said about leaving the door open."

"Well, what of it?" Hans Middlekauf asked.

"Let every one of us show him that we can obey him. When he raps for us to go in, I want you all to form in line. I 'll lead off, go in and shut the door; you follow next, Hans, and be sure and shut the door; you come next, Philip; then Michael, and so on, — every one shutting the door. If you don't, remember that Cipher has promised to flog you."

The boys saw through the joke, and laughed heartily. "Jingo, that is a good one, Paul. Cipher will be as mad as a March hare. I 'll make the old door rattle," said Hans.

Rap — rap — rap — rap! went the master's ruler upon the window.

"Fall into line, boys," said Paul. They obeyed orders as if he were a general. "Now remember, every one of you, to shut the door just as soon as you are in. Do it quick, and take your seats. Don't laugh, but be as sober as deacons." There was giggling in the ranks. "Silence!" said Paul. The boys smoothed their faces. Paul opened the door, stepped in, and shut it in an instant, — slam! Hans opened it, — slam! it went, with a jar which made the windows rattle. Philip followed, — slam! Michael next, — bang! it went, jarring the house.

"Let the door be open," said Cipher; but Michael was in his seat; and — bang! again, — slam! — bang! — slam! — bang! it went.

"Let it be open, I say!" he roared, but the boys outside did not hear him, and it kept going, — slam! — slam! — slam! — bang! — bang! — bang! — till the fiftieth boy was in.

"You started that, sir," Cipher said, addressing Paul, for he had discovered that Paul Parker loved fun, and was a leading spirit among the boys.

"I obeyed your orders, sir," Paul replied ready

to burst into a roar at the success of his experiment.

"Did you not tell the boys to slam the door as hard as they could?"

"No, sir. I told them to remember what you had said, and that, if they did n't shut the door, they would get a flogging."

"That is just what he said, Master," said Hans Middlekauf, brimming over with fun. Cipher could not dispute it. He saw that they had literally obeyed his orders, and that he had been outwitted. He did not know what to do; and being weak and inefficient, did nothing.

Paul loved hunting and fishing; on Saturday afternoons he made the woods ring with the crack of his grandfather's gun, bringing squirrels from the tallest trees, and taking quails upon the wing. He was quick to see, and swift to take aim. He was cool of nerve, and so steady of aim that he rarely missed. It was summer, and he wore no shoes. He walked so lightly that he scarcely rustled a leaf. The partridges did not see him till he was close upon them, and then, before they could rise from their cover flash! — bang! — and they went into his bag.

One day as he was on his return from the woods with the gun upon his shoulder, and the powder-horn at his side, he saw a gathering of people in the street. Men, women, and children were out, — the women without bonnets. He wondered what was going on. Some women were wringing their hands ; and all were greatly excited.

"O dear, isn't it dreadful!" "What will become of us?" "The Lord have mercy upon us!" — were the expressions which he heard. Then they wrung their hands again, and moaned.

"What is up?" he asked of Hans Middlekauf.

"Have n't you heard?"

"No, what is it?"

"Why, there is a big black bull-dog, the biggest that ever was, that has run mad. He has bitten ever so many other dogs, and horses, sheep, and cattle. He is as big as a bear, and froths at the mouth. He is the savagest critter that ever was," said Hans in a breath.

"Why don't somebody kill him?"

"They are afraid of him," said Hans.

"I should think they might kill him," Paul replied.

"I reckon you would run as fast as anybody else, if he should show himself round here," said Hans.

"There he is! Run! run! run for your lives!" was the sudden cry.

Paul looked up the street, and saw a very large bull-dog coming upon the trot. Never was there such a scampering. People ran into the nearest houses, pellmell. One man jumped into his wagon, lashed his horse into a run, and went down the street, losing his hat in his flight, while Hans Middlekauf went up a tree.

"Run, Paul! Run! he 'll bite you!" cried Mr. Leatherby from the window of his shoe-shop. People looked out from the windows and repeated the cry, a half-dozen at once; but Paul took no notice of them Those who were nearest him heard the click of his gun-lock. The dog came nearer, growling, and snarling, his mouth wide open, showing his teeth, his eyes glaring, and white froth dripping from his lips. Paul stood alone in the street. There was a sudden silence. It was a scene for a painter, — a barefoot boy in patched clothes, with an old hat on his head, standing calmly before the brute whose bite was death in its most terrible form. One thought

had taken possession of Paul's mind, that he ought to kill the dog.

Nearer, nearer, came the dog ; he was not a rod off. Paul had read that no animal can withstand the steady gaze of the human eye. He looked the dog steadily in the face. He held his breath. Not a nerve trembled. The dog stopped, looked at Paul a moment, broke into a louder growl, opened his jaws wider, his eyes glaring more wildly, and stepped slowly forward. Now or never, Paul thought, was his time. The breach of the gun touched his shoulder ; his eye ran along the barrel, — bang ! the dog rolled over with a yelp and a howl, but was up again, growling and trying to get at Paul, who in an instant seized his gun by the barrel, and brought the breech down upon the dog's skull, giving him blow after blow.

" Kill him ! kill him ! " shouted the people from the windows.

" Give it to him ! Mash his head ! " cried Hans from the tree.

The dog soon became a mangled and bloody mass of flesh and bones. The people came out from their houses.

"That was well done for a boy," said Mr. Funk.

"Or for a man either," said Mr. Chrome, who came up and patted Paul on his back.

"I should have thrown my lapstone at him, if I could have got my window open," said Mr. Leatherby. Mr. Noggin, the cooper, who had taken refuge in Leatherby's shop, afterwards said that Leatherby was frightened half to death, and kept saying, "Just as like as not he will make a spring and dart right through the window!"

"Nobly, bravely done, Paul," said Judge Adams. "Let me shake hands with you, my boy." He and Mrs. Adams and Azalia had seen it all from their parlor window.

"O Paul, I was afraid he would bite and kill you, or that your gun would miss fire. I trembled all over just like a leaf," said Azalia, still pale and trembling. "O, I am so glad you have killed him!" She looked up into his face earnestly, and there was such a light in her eyes, that Paul was glad he had killed the dog, for her sake.

"Were n't you afraid, Paul?" she asked.

"No. If I had been afraid, I should have missed him, perhaps; I made up my mind to kill him, and what was the use of being afraid?"

Many were the praises bestowed upon Paul. "How noble! how heroic!" the people said. Hans told the story to all the boys in the village. "Paul was just as cool as — cool as — a cucumber," he said, that being the best comparison he could think of. The people came and looked at the dog, to see how large he was, and how savage, and went away saying, "I am glad he is dead, but I don't see how Paul had the courage to face him."

Paul went home and told his mother what had happened. She turned pale while listening to the story, and held her breath, and clasped her hands; but when he had finished, and when she thought that, if Paul had not killed the dog, many might have been bitten, she was glad, and said, "You did right, my son. It is our duty to face danger if we can do good." A tear glistened in her eye as she kissed him. "God bless you, Paul," she said, and smiled upon him through her tears.

All the dogs which had been bitten were killed to prevent them from running mad. A hard time of it the dogs of New Hope had, for some which had not been bitten did not escape the dog-killers, who went through the town knocking them over with clubs.

Although Paul was so cool and courageous in the moment of danger, he trembled and felt weak afterwards when he thought of the risk he had run. That night when he said his evening prayer, he thanked God for having protected him. He dreamed it all over again in the night. He saw the dog coming at him with his mouth wide open, the froth dropping from his lips, and his eyes glaring. He heard his growl, — only it was not a growl, but a branch of the old maple which rubbed against the house when the wind blew. That was what set him a dreaming. In his dream he had no gun, so he picked up the first thing he could lay his hands on, and let drive at the dog. Smash! there was a great racket, and a jingling of glass. Paul was awake in an instant, and found that he had jumped out of bed, and was standing in the middle of the floor, and that he had knocked over the spinning-wheel, and a lot of old trumpery, and had thrown one of his grandfather's old boots through the window.

"What in the world are you up to, Paul?" his mother asked, calling from the room below, in alarm.

"Killing the dog a second time, mother," Paul replied, laughing and jumping into bed again.

CHAPTER III.

MERRY TIMES.

WHEN the long northeast storms set in, and the misty clouds hung over the valley, and went hurrying away to the west, brushing the tops of the trees; when the rain, hour after hour, and day after day, fell aslant upon the roof of the little old house; wher the wind swept around the eaves, and dashed in wild gusts against the windows, and moaned and wailed in the forests, — then it was that Paul sometimes felt his spirits droop, for the circumstances of life were all against him. He was poor. His dear, kind mother was sick. She had worked day and night to keep that terrible wolf from the door, which is always prowling around the houses of poor people. But the wolf had come, and was looking in at the windows. There was a debt due Mr. Funk for rice, sugar, biscuit, tea, and other things which Doctor Arnica said his mother must have. There was the doctor's bill. The flour-barrel was getting low, and the meal-bag was almost empty. Paul saw the wolf

every night as he lay in his bed, and he wished he could kill it.

When his mother was taken sick, he left school and became her nurse. It was hard for him to lay down his books, for he loved them, but it was pleasant to wait upon her. The neighbors were kind. Azalia Adams often came tripping in with something nice, — a tumbler of jelly, or a plate of toast, which her mother had prepared; and she had such cheerful words, and spoke so pleasantly, and moved round the room so softly, putting everything in order, that the room was lighter, even on the darkest days, for her presence.

When, after weeks of confinement to her bed, Paul's mother was strong enough to sit in her easy-chair, Paul went out to fight the wolf. He worked for Mr. Middlekauf, in his cornfield. He helped Mr. Chrome paint wagons. He surveyed land, and ran lines for the farmers, earning a little here and a little there. As fast as he obtained a dollar, it went to pay the debts. As the seasons passed away, — spring, summer, and autumn, — Paul could see that the wolf howled less fiercely day by day. He denied himself everything, except plain food. He

was tall, stout, hearty, and rugged. The winds gave him health; his hands were hard, but his heart was tender. When through with his day's work, though his bones ached and his eyes were drowsy, he seldom went to sleep without first studying awhile, and closing with a chapter from the Bible, for he remembered what his grandfather often said, — that a chapter from the Bible was a good thing to sleep on.

The cool and bracing breezes of November, the nourishing food which Paul obtained, brought the color once more to his mother's cheeks; and when at length she was able to be about the house, they had a jubilee, — a glad day of thanksgiving, — for, in addition to this blessing of health, Paul had killed the wolf, and the debts were all paid.

As the winter came on, the subject of employing Mr. Rhythm to teach a singing-school was discussed. Mr. Quaver, a tall, slim man, with a long, red nose, had led the choir for many years. He had a loud voice, and twisted his words so badly, that his singing was like the blare of a trumpet. On Sundays, after Rev. Mr. Surplice read the hymn, the people were accustomed to hear a loud Hawk! from Mr. Quaver, as he tossed his tobacco-quid into a spittoon, and an

Ahem! from Miss Gamut. She was the leading first treble, a small lady with a sharp, shrill voice. Then Mr. Fiddleman sounded the key on the bass-viol, do-mi-sol-do, helping the trebles and tenors climb the stairs of the scale; then he hopped down again, and rounded off with a thundering swell at the bottom, to let them know he was safely down, and ready to go ahead. Mr. Quaver led, and the choir followed like sheep, all in their own way and fashion.

The people had listened to this style of music till they were tired of it. They wanted a change, and decided to engage Mr. Rhythm, a nice young man, to teach a singing-school for the young folks. "We have a hundred boys and girls here in the village, who ought to learn to sing, so that they can sit in the singing-seats, and praise God," said Judge Adams.

But Mr. Quaver opposed the project. "The young folks want a frolic, sir," he said; "yes, sir, a frolic, a high time. Rhythm will be teaching them new-fangled notions. You know, Judge, that I hate flummididdles; I go for the good old things, sir. The old tunes which have stood the wear and tear of time, and the good old style of singing, sir."

Mr. Quaver did not say all he thought, for he could see that, if the singing-school was kept, he would be in danger of losing his position as chorister. But, notwithstanding his opposition, Mr. Rhythm was engaged to teach the school. Paul determined to attend. He loved music.

"You have n't any coat fit to wear," said his mother. "I have altered over your grandfather's pants and vest for you, but I cannot alter his coat. You will have to stay at home, I guess."

"I can't do that, mother, for Mr. Rhythm is one of the best teachers that ever was, and I don't want to miss the chance. I 'll wear grandpa's coat just as it is."

"The school will laugh at you."

"Well, let them laugh, I sha'n't stay at home for that. I guess I can stand it," said Paul, resolutely.

The evening fixed upon for the school to commence arrived. All the young folks in the town were there. Those who lived out of the village, — the farmers' sons and daughters, — came in red, yellow, and green wagons. The girls wore close-fitting hoods with pink linings, which they called

"kiss-me-if-ye-dares." Their cheeks were all aglow with the excitement of the occasion. When they saw Mr. Rhythm, how pleasant and smiling he was, — when they heard his voice, so sweet and melodious, — when they saw how spryly he walked, as if he meant to accomplish what he had undertaken, — they said to one another, "How different he is from Mr. Quaver!"

Paul was late on the first evening; for when he put on his grandfather's coat, his mother planned a long while to see if there was not some way by which she could make it look better. Once she took the shears and was going to cut off the tail, but Paul stopped her. "I don't want it curtailed, mother."

"It makes you look like a little old man, Paul; I would n't go."

"If I had better clothes, I should wear them, mother; but as I have n't, I shall wear these. I hope to earn money enough some time to get a better coat; but grandpa wore this, and I am not ashamed to wear what he wore," he replied, more resolute than ever. Perhaps, if he could have seen how he looked, he would not have been quite so

determined, for the sleeves hung like bags on his arms, and the tail almost touched the floor.

Mr. Rhythm had just rapped the scholars to their seats when Paul entered. There was a tittering, a giggle, then a roar of laughter. Mr. Rhythm looked round to see what was the matter, and smiled. For a moment Paul's courage failed him. It was not so easy to be laughed at as he had imagined. He was all but ready to turn about and leave the room. "No I won't, I 'll face it out," he said to himself, walking deliberately to a seat, and looking bravely round, as if asking, "What are you laughing at?"

There was something in his manner which instantly won Mr. Rhythm's respect, and which made him ashamed of himself for having laughed. "Silence! No more laughing," he said; but, notwithstanding the command, there was a constant tittering among the girls. Mr. Rhythm began by saying, "We will sing Old Hundred. I want you all to sing, whether you can sing right or not." He snapped his tuning-fork, and began. The school followed, each one singing, — putting in sharps, flats, naturals, notes, and rests, just as they pleased. "Very well. Good volume of sound. Only I don't think Old

Hundred ever was sung so before, or ever will be again," said the master, smiling.

Michael Murphy was confident that he sang gloriously, though he never varied his tone up or down. He was ciphering in fractions at school, and what most puzzled him were the figures set to the bass. He wondered if $\frac{6}{4}$ was a vulgar fraction, and if so, he thought it would be better to express it as a mixed number, $1\frac{1}{2}$.

During the evening, Mr. Rhythm, noticing that Michael sang without any variation of tone, said, "Now, Master Murphy, please sing *la* with me";— and Michael sang bravely, not frightened in the least.

"Very well. Now please sing it a little higher."

"*La*," sang Michael on the same pitch, but louder.

"Not louder, but higher."

"LA!" responded Michael, still louder, but with the pitch unchanged.

There was tittering among the girls.

"Not so, but thus,"— and Mr. Rhythm gave an example, first low, then high. "Now once more."

"LA!" bellowed Michael on the sa ne pitch.

Daphne Dare giggled aloud, and the laughter, like

a train of powder, ran through the girls' seats over to the boys' side of the house, where it exploded in a loud haw! haw! Michael laughed with the others, but he did not know what for.

Recess came. "Halloo, Grandpa! How are you, Old Pensioner? Your coat puckers under the arms, and there is a wrinkle in the back," said Philip Funk to Paul. His sister Fanny pointed her finger at him; and Paul heard her whisper to one of the girls, "Did you ever see such a monkey?"

It nettled him, and so, losing his temper, he said to Philip, "Mind your business."

"Just hear Grandaddy Parker, the old gentleman in the bob-tailed coat," said Philip.

"You are a puppy," said Paul. But he was vexed with himself for having said it. If he had held his tongue, and kept his temper, and braved the sneers of Philip in silence, he might have won a victory; for he remembered a Sunday-school lesson upon the text, "He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." As it was, he had suffered a defeat, and went home that night disgusted with himself.

Pleasant were those singing-school evenings. Un-

der Mr. Rhythm's instructions the young people made rapid progress. Then what fine times they had at recess, eating nuts, apples, and confectionery, picking out the love-rhymes from the sugar-cockles!

"I cannot tell the love
I feel for you, my dove."

was Philip's gift to Azalia. Paul had no money to purchase sweet things at the store; his presents were nuts which he had gathered in the autumn. In the kindness of his heart he gave a double-handful to Philip's sister, Fanny; but she turned up her nose, and let them drop upon the floor.

Society in New Hope was mixed. Judge Adams, Colonel Dare, and Mr. Funk were rich men. Colonel Dare was said to be worth a hundred thousand dollars. No one knew what Mr. Funk was worth; but he had a store, and a distillery, which kept smoking day and night and Sunday, without cessation, grinding up corn, and distilling it into whiskey. There was always a great black smoke rising from the distillery-chimney. The fires were always roaring, and the great vats steaming. Colonel Dare made his money by buying and selling land, wool, corn, and cattle. Judge Adams was an able lawyer, known far

and near as honest, upright, and learned. He had a large practice; but though the Judge and Colonel were so wealthy, and lived in fine houses, they did not feel that they were better than their neighbors, so that there was no aristocracy in the place, but the rich and the poor were alike respected and esteemed.

The New Year was at hand, and Daphne Dare was to give a party. She was Colonel Dare's only child, — a laughing, blue-eyed, sensible girl, who attended the village school, and was in the same class with Paul.

"Whom shall I invite to my party, father?" she asked.

"Just whom you please, my dear," said the Colonel.

"I don't know what to do about inviting Paul Parker. Fanny Funk says she don't want to associate with a fellow who is so poor that he wears his grandfather's old clothes," said Daphne.

"Poverty is not a crime, my daughter. I was poor once, — poor as Paul is. Money is not virtue, my dear. It is a good thing to have; but persons are not necessarily bad because they are poor, neither are they good because they are rich," said the Colonel.

"Should you invite him, father, if you were in my place?"

"I do not wish to say, my child, for I want you to decide the matter yourself."

"Azalia says that she would invite him; but Fanny says that if I invite him, she shall not come."

"Aha!" The Colonel opened his eyes wide. "Well, my dear, you are not to be influenced wholly by what Azalia says, and you are to pay no attention to what Fanny threatens. You make the party You have a perfect right to invite whom you please; and if Fanny don't choose to come, she has the privilege of staying away. I think, however, that she will not be likely to stay at home even if you give Paul an invitation. Be guided by your own sense of right, my darling. That is the best guide."

"I wish you 'd give Paul a coat, father. You can afford to, can't you?"

"Yes; but he can't afford to receive it." Daphne looked at her father in amazement. "He can't afford to receive such a gift from me, because it is better for him to fight the battle of life without any help from me or anybody else at present. A good man offered to help me when I was a poor boy; but I

thanked him, and said, 'No, sir.' I had made up my mind to cut my own way, and I guess Paul has made up his mind to do the same thing," said the Colonel.

"I shall invite him. I 'll let Fanny know that I have a mind of my own," said Daphne, with determination in her voice.

Her father kissed her, but kept his thoughts to himself. He appeared to be pleased, and Daphne thought that he approved her decision.

The day before New Year Paul received a neatly folded note, addressed to Mr. Paul Parker. How funny it looked! It was the first time in his life that he had seen "Mr." prefixed to his name. He opened it, and read that Miss Daphne Dare would receive her friends on New Year's eve at seven o'clock. A great many thoughts passed through his mind. How could he go and wear his grandfather's coat? At school he was on equal footing with all; but to be one of a party in a richly furnished parlor, where Philip, Fanny, and Azalia, and other boys and girls whose fathers had money, could turn their backs on him and snub him, was very different. It was very kind in Daphne to invite him, and ought he not to accept her invitation? Would she not think

it a slight if he did not go? What excuse could he offer if he stayed away? None, except that he had no nice clothes. But she knew that, yet she had invited him. She was a true-hearted girl, and would not have asked him if she had not wanted him. Thus he turned the matter over, and decided to go.

But when the time came, Paul was in no haste to be there. Two or three times his heart failed him, while on his way; but looking across the square, and seeing Colonel Dare's house all aglow, — lights in the parlors and chambers, he pushed on resolutely, determined to be manly, notwithstanding his poverty. He reached the house, rang the bell, and was welcomed by Daphne in the hall.

"Good evening, Paul. You are very late. I was afraid you were not coming. All the others are here," she said, her face beaming with happiness, joy, and excitement. She was elegantly dressed, for she was her father's pet, and he bought everything for her which he thought would make her happy.

"Better late than never, is n't it?" said Paul, not knowing what else to say.

Although the party had been assembled nearly an

hour, there had been no games. The girls were huddled in groups on one side of the room, and the boys on the other, all shy, timid, and waiting for somebody to break the ice. Azalia was playing the piano, while Philip stood by her side. He was dressed in a new suit of broadcloth, and wore an eye-glass. Fanny was present, though she had threatened not to attend if Paul was invited. She had changed her mind. She thought it would be better to attend and make the place too hot for Paul; she would get up such a laugh upon him that he would be glad to take his hat and sneak away, and never show himself in respectable society again. Philip was in the secret, and so were a dozen others who looked up to Philip and Fanny. Daphne entered the parlor, followed by Paul. There was a sudden tittering, snickering, and laughing. Paul stopped and bowed, then stood erect.

"I declare, if there is n't old Grandaddy," said Philip, squinting through his eye-glass.

"O my! how funny!" said a girl from Fairview.

"Ridiculous! It is a shame!" said Fanny, turning up her nose.

"Who is he?" the Fairview girl asked.

"A poor fellow who lives on charity, — so poor that

he wears his grandfather's old clothes. We don't associate with him," was Fanny's reply.

Paul heard it. His cheek flushed, but he stood there, determined to brave it out. Azalia heard and saw it all. She stopped playing in the middle of a measure, rose from her seat with her cheeks all aflame, and walked towards Paul, extending her hand and welcoming him. "I am glad you have come, Paul. We want you to wake us up. We have been half asleep," she said.

The laughter ceased instantly, for Azalia was queen among them. Beautiful in form and feature, her chestnut hair falling in luxuriant curls upon her shoulders, her dark hazel eyes flashing indignantly, her cheeks like blush-roses, every feature of her countenance lighted up by the excitement of the moment, her bearing subdued the conspiracy at once, hushing the derisive laughter, and compelling respect, not only for herself, but for Paul. It required an effort on his part to keep back the tears from his eyes, so grateful was he for her kindness.

"Yes, Paul, we want you to be our general, and tell us what to do," said Daphne.

"Very well, let us have Copenhagen to begin with," he said.

The ice was broken. Daphne brought in her mother's clothes-line, the chairs were taken from the room, and in five minutes the parlor was humming like a beehive.

"I don't see what you can find to like in that disagreeable creature," said Philip to Azalia.

"He is a good scholar, and kind to his mother, and you know how courageous he was when he killed that terrible dog," was her reply.

"I think he is an impudent puppy. What right has he to thrust himself into good company, wearing his grandfather's old clothes?" Philip responded, dangling his eye-glass and running his soft hand through his hair.

"Paul is poor; but I never have heard anything against his character," said Azalia.

"Poor folks ought to be kept out of good society," said Philip.

"What do you say to that picture?" said Azalia, directing his attention towards a magnificent picture of Franklin crowned with laurel by the ladies of the court of France, which hung on the wall. "Ben

jamin Franklin was a poor boy, and dipped candles for a living; but he became a great man."

"Dipped candles! Why, I never heard of that before," said Philip, looking at the engraving through his eye-glass.

"I don't think it is any disgrace to Paul to be poor. I am glad that Daphne invited him," said Azalia, so resolutely that Philip remained silent. He was shallow-brained and ignorant, and thought it not best to hazard an exposure of his ignorance by pursuing the conversation.

After Copenhagen they had Fox and Geese, and Blind-man's-buff. They guessed riddles and conundrums, had magic writing, questions and answers, and made the parlor, the sitting-room, the spacious halls, and the wide stairway ring with their merry laughter. How pleasant the hours! Time flew on swiftest wings. They had a nice supper, — sandwiches, tongue, ham, cakes, custards, floating-islands, apples, and nuts. After supper they had stories, serious and laughable, about ghosts and witches, till the clock in the dining-room held up both of its hands and pointed to the figure twelve, as if in amazement at their late staying. "Twelve o'clock!

Why, how short the evening has been!" said they when they found how late it was. They had forgotten all about Paul's coat, for he had been the life of the party, suggesting something new when the games lagged. He was so gentlemanly, and laughed so heartily and pleasantly, and was so wide awake, and managed everything so well, that, notwithstanding the conspiracy to put him down, he had won the good will of all the party.

During the evening Colonel Dare and Mrs. Dare entered the room. The Colonel shook hands with Paul, and said, "I am very happy to see you here to-night, Paul." It was spoken so heartily and pleasantly that Paul knew the Colonel meant it.

The young gentlemen were to wait upon the young ladies home. Their hearts went pit-a-pat. They thought over whom to ask and what to say. They walked nervously about the hall, pulling on their gloves, while the girls were putting on their cloaks and hoods up stairs. They also were in a fever of expectation and excitement, whispering mysteriously, their hearts going like trip-hammers.

Daphne stood by the door to bid her guests good night. "I am very glad that you came to-night.

Paul," she said, pressing his hand in gratitude, "I don't know what we should have done without you."

"I have passed a very pleasant evening," he replied.

Azalia came tripping down the stairs. "Shall I see you home, Azalia?" Paul asked.

"Miss Adams, shall I have the delightful pleasure of being permitted to escort you to your residence?" said Philip, with his most gallant air, at the same time pushing by Paul with a contemptuous look.

"Thank you, Philip, but I have an escort," said Azalia, accepting Paul's arm.

The night was frosty and cold, though it was clear and pleasant. The full moon was high in the heavens, the air was still, and there were no sounds to break the peaceful silence, except the water dashing over the dam by the mill, the footsteps of the departing guests upon the frozen ground, and the echoing of their voices. Now that he was with Azalia alone, Paul wanted to tell her how grateful he was for all she had done for him; but he could only say, "I thank you, Azalia, for your kindness to me to-night."

"O, don't mention it, Paul; I am glad if I have helped you. Good night."

How light-hearted he was! He went home, and climbed the creaking stairway, to his chamber. The moon looked in upon him, and smiled. He could not sleep, so happy was he. How sweet those parting words! The water babbled them to the rocks, and beyond the river in the grand old forest, where the breezes were blowing, there was a pleasant murmuring of voices, as if the elms and oaks were having a party, and all were saying, "We are glad if we have helped you."

CHAPTER IV.

MUSIC AND PAINTING.

PHILIP went home alone from the party, out of sorts with himself, angry with Azalia, and boiling over with wrath toward Paul. He set his teeth together, and clenched his fist. He would like to blacken Paul's eyes and flatten his nose. The words of Azalia — "I know nothing against Paul's character" — rang in his ears and vexed him. He thought upon them till his steps, falling upon the frozen ground, seemed to say, "Character! — character! — character!" as if Paul had something which he had not.

"So because he has character, and I have n't, you give me the mitten, do you, Miss Azalia?" he said, as if he was addressing Azalia.

He knew that Paul had a good name. He was the best singer in the singing-school, and Mr. Rhythm often called upon him to sing in a duet with Azalia or Daphne. Sometimes he sang a solo so well, that the spectators whispered to one another, that,

if Paul went on as he had begun, he would be ahead of Mr. Rhythm.

Philip had left the singing-school. It was dull music to him to sit through the evening, and say "Down, left, right, up," and be drilled, hour after hour. It was vastly more agreeable to lounge in the bar-room of the tavern, with a half-dozen good fellows, smoking cigars, playing cards, taking a drink of whiskey, and, when it was time for the singing-school to break up, go home with the girls, then return to the tavern and carouse till midnight or later. To be cut out by Paul in his attentions to Azalia was intolerable.

"Character! — character! — character!" said his boots all the while as he walked. He stopped short, and ground his heels into the frozen earth. He was in front of Miss Dobb's house.

Miss Dobb was a middle-aged lady, who wore spectacles, had a sharp nose, a peaked chin, a pinched-up mouth, thin cheeks, and long, bony fingers. She kept the village school when Paul and Philip were small boys, and Paul used to think that she wanted to pick him to pieces, her fingers were so long and bony. She knew pretty much all that was going

on in the village, for she visited somewhere every afternoon to find out what had happened. Captain Binnacle called her the Daily Advertiser.

"You are the cause of my being jilted, you tattling old maid; you have told that I was a good-for-nothing scapegrace, and I 'll pay you for it," said Philip, shaking his fist at the house; and walked on again, meditating how to do it, his boots at each successive step saying, "Character! character!"

He went home and tossed all night in his bed, not getting a wink of sleep, planning how to pay Miss Dobb, and upset Paul.

The next night Philip went to bed earlier than usual, saying, with a yawn, as he took the light to go up stairs, "How sleepy I am!" But, instead of going to sleep, he never was more wide awake. He lay till all in the house were asleep, till he heard the clock strike twelve, then arose, went down stairs softly, carrying his boots, and, when outside the door, put them on. He looked round to see if there was any one astir; but the village was still, — there was not a light to be seen. He went to Mr. Chrome's shop, stopped, and looked round once more; but, seeing no one, raised a window and entered. The

moon streamed through the windows, and fell upon the floor, making the shop so light that he had no difficulty in finding Mr. Chrome's paint buckets and brushes. Then, with a bucket in his hand, he climbed out, closed the window, and went to Miss Dobb's. He approached softly, listening and looking to see if any one was about; but there were no footsteps except his own. He painted great letters on the side of the house, chuckling as he thought of what would happen in the morning.

"There, Miss Vinegar, you old liar, I won't charge anything for that sign," he said, when he had finished. He left the bucket on the step, and went home, chuckling all the way.

In the morning Miss Dobb saw a crowd of people in front of her house, looking towards it and laughing. Mr. Leatherby had come out from his shop; Mr. Noggin, the cooper, was there, smoking his pipe; also, Mrs. Shelbarke, who lived across the street. Philip was there. "That is a 'cute trick, I vow," said he. Everybody was on a broad grin.

"What in the world is going on, I should like to know!" said Miss Dobb, greatly wondering. "There

must be something funny. Why, they are looking at my house, as true as I am alive!"

Miss Dobb was not a woman to be kept in the dark about anything a great while. She stepped to the front door, opened it, and with her pleasantest smile and softest tone of voice said: "Good morning, neighbors; you seem to be very much pleased at something. May I ask what you see to laugh at?"

"Te-he-he-he!" snickered a little boy, who pointed to the side of the house, and the by-standers followed his lead, with a loud chorus of guffaws.

Miss Dobb looked upon the wall, and saw, in red letters, as if she had gone into business, opened a store, and put out a sign, — "MISS DOBB, LIES, SCANDAL, GOSSIP, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL."

She threw up her hands in horror. Her eyes flashed; she gasped for breath. There was a paint-bucket and brush on the door-step; on one side of the bucket she saw the word Chrome.

"The villain! I'll make him smart for this," she said, running in, snatching her bonnet, and out again, making all haste towards Squire Capias's office, to have Mr. Chrome arrested.

The Squire heard her story. There was a merry twinkling of his eye, but he kept his countenance till she was through.

"I do not think that Mr. Chrome did it; he is not such a fool as to leave his bucket and brush there as evidence against him; you had better let it rest awhile," said he.

Mr. Chrome laughed when he saw the sign. "I did n't do it; I was abed and asleep, as my wife will testify. Somebody stole my bucket and brush; but it is a good joke on Dobb, I 'll be blamed if it is n't," said he.

Who did it? That was the question.

"I will give fifty dollars to know," said Miss Dobb, her lips quivering with anger.

Philip heard her and said, "Is n't there a fellow who sometimes helps Mr. Chrome paint wagons?"

"Yes, I did n't think of him. It is just like him. There he comes now; I 'll make him confess it." Miss Dobb's eyes flashed, her lips trembled, she was so angry. She remembered that one of the pigs which Paul painted, when he was a boy, was hers; she also remembered how he sent Mr. Smith's old white horse on a tramp after a bundle of hay.

Paul was on his way to Mr. Chrome's shop, to begin work for the day. He wondered at the crowd. He saw the sign, and laughed with the rest.

"You did that, sir," said Miss Dobb, coming up to him, reaching out her long hand and clutching at him with her bony fingers, as if she would like to tear him to pieces. "You did it, you villain! Now you need n't deny it; you painted my pig once, and now you have done this. You are a mean, good-for-nothing scoundrel," she said, working herself into a terrible passion.

"I did not do it," said Paul, nettled at the charge, and growing red in the face.

"You are a liar! you show your guilt in your countenance," said Miss Dobb.

Paul's face was on fire. Never till then had he been called a liar. He was about to tell her loudly, that she was a meddler, tattler, and hypocrite, but he remembered that he had read somewhere, that "he who loses his temper loses his cause," and did not speak the words. He looked her steadily in the face, and said calmly, "I did not do it," and went on to his work.

Weeks went by. The singing-school was drawing

to a close. Paul had made rapid progress. His voice was round, rich, full, and clear. He no longer appeared at school wearing his grandfather's coat, for he had worked for Mr. Chrome, painting wagons, till he had earned enough to purchase a new suit of clothes. Besides, it was discovered that he could survey land, and several of the farmers employed him to run the lines between their farms. Mr. Rhythm took especial pains to help him on in singing, and before winter was through he could master the crookedest anthem in the book. Daphne Dare was the best alto, Hans Middlekauf the best bass, and Azalia the best treble. Sometimes Mr. Rhythm had the four sing a quartette, or Azalia and Paul sang a duet. At times, the school sang, while he listened. "I want you to learn to depend upon yourselves," said he. Then it was that Paul's voice was heard above all others, so clear and distinct, and each note so exact in time that they felt he was their leader.

One evening Mr. Rhythm called Paul into the floor, and gave him the rattan with which he beat time, saying, "I want you to be leader in this tune; I resign the command to you, and you are to do just as if I were not here." The blood rushed to

Paul's face, his knees trembled ; but he felt that it was better to try and fail, than be a coward. He sounded the key, but his voice was husky and trembling. Fanny Funk, who had turned up her nose at Mr. Rhythm's proposition, giggled aloud, and there was laughing around the room. It nerved him in an instant. He opened his lips to shout, Silence! then he thought that they would not respect his authority, and would only laugh louder, which would make him appear ridiculous. He stood quietly and said, not in a husky voice, but calmly, pleasantly, and deliberately, "When the ladies have finished their laughter we will commence." The laughter ceased. He waited till the room was so still that they could hear the clock tick. "Now we will try it," said he. They did not sing it right, and he made them go over it again and again, drilling them till they sang it so well that Mr. Rhythm and the spectators clapped their hands.

"You will have a competent leader after I leave you," said Mr. Rhythm. Paul had gained this success by practice hour after hour, day after day, week after week, at home, till he was master of what he had undertaken.

The question came up in parish meeting, whether the school should join the choir? Mr. Quaver and the old members opposed it, but they were voted down. Nothing was said about having a new chorister, for no one wished to hurt Mr. Quaver's feelings by appointing Paul in his place; but the school did not relish the idea of being led by Mr. Quaver, while, on the other hand, the old singers did not mean to be overshadowed by the young upstarts.

It was an eventful Sunday in New Hope when the singing-school joined the choir. The church was crowded. Fathers and mothers who seldom attended meeting were present to see their children in the singers' seats. The girls were dressed in white, for it was a grand occasion. Mr. Quaver and the old choir were early in their places. Mr. Quaver's red nose was redder than ever, and he had a stern look. He took no notice of the new singers, who stood in the background, not daring to take their seats, and not knowing what to do till Paul arrived.

"Where shall we sit, sir?" Paul asked, respectfully.

"Anywhere back there," said Mr. Quaver.

"We would like to have you assign us seats," said Paul.

"I have nothing to do about it; you may sit anywhere, and sing when you are a mind to, or hold your tongues," said Mr. Quaver, sharply.

"Very well; we will do so," said Paul, a little touched, telling the school to occupy the back seats He was their acknowledged leader. He took his place behind Mr. Quaver, with Hans, Azalia, and Daphne near him. Mr. Quaver did not look round, neither did Miss Gamut, nor any of the old choir. They felt that the new-comers were intruders, who had no right there.

The bell ceased its tolling, and Rev. Mr. Surplice ascended the pulpit-stairs. He was a venerable man. He had preached many years, and his long, white hair, falling upon his shoulders, seemed to crown him with a saintly glory. The people, old and young, honored, respected, and loved him; for he had grave counsel for the old, kind words for the young, and pleasant stories for the little ones. Everybody said that he was ripening for heaven. He rejoiced when he looked up into the gallery and saw such a goodly array of youth, beauty, and

loveliness. Then, bowing his head in prayer, and looking onward to the eternal years, he seemed to see them members of a heavenly choir, clothed in white, and singing, "Alleluia! salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God!"

After prayer, he read a hymn:—

"Now shall my head be lifted high
Above my foes around;
And songs of joy and victory
Within thy temple sound."

There was a smile of satisfaction on Mr. Quaver's countenance while selecting the tune, as if he had already won a victory. There was a clearing of throats; then Mr. Fiddleman gave the key on the bass-viol. As Mr. Quaver had told Paul that the school might sing when they pleased, or hold their tongues, he determined to act independently of Mr. Quaver.

"After one measure," whispered Paul. He knew they would watch his hand, and commence in exact time. The old choir was accustomed to sing without regard to time.

Mr. Quaver commenced louder than usual, — twisting, turning, drawling, and flattening the first word

as if it was spelled n-e-a-w. Miss Gamut and Mr. Cleff and the others dropped in one by one. Not a sound as yet from the school. All stood eagerly watching Paul. He cast a quick glance right and left. His hand moved, — down — left — right — up. They burst into the tune, fifty voices together. It was like the broadside of a fifty-gun frigate. The old choir was confounded. Miss Gamut stopped short. Captain Binnacle, who once was skipper of a schooner on the Lakes, and who owned a pew in front of the pulpit, said afterwards, that she was thrown on her beam-ends as if struck by a nor'-wester and all her main-sail blown into ribbons in a jiffy. Mr. Quaver, though confused for a moment, recovered; Miss Gamut also righted herself. Though confounded, they were not yet defeated. Mr. Quaver stamped upon the floor, which brought Mr. Cleff to his senses. Mr. Quaver looked as if he would say, "Put down the upstarts!" Mr. Fiddleman played with all his might; Miss Gamut screamed at the top of her voice, while Mr. Cleff puffed out his fat cheeks and became red in the face, doing his utmost to drown them.

The people looked and listened in amazement

Mr. Surplice stood reverently in his place. Those who sat nearest the pulpit said that there was a smile on his countenance.

It was a strange fugue, but each held on to the end of the verse, the young folks getting out ahead of Mr. Quaver and his flock, and having a breathing spell before commencing the second stanza. So they went through the hymn. Then Mr. Surplice read from the Bible: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded his blessing forevermore."

Turning to the choir, he said, "My dear friends, I perceive that there is a want of unity in your services, as singers of the sanctuary; therefore, that the peace and harmony of the place may not be broken, I propose that, when the next psalm is given, the old members of the choir sing the first stanza, and the new members the second, and so through the hymn. By thus doing there will be no disagreement."

Each one — old and young — resolved to do his best, for comparisons would be made It would be the struggle for victory.

"I will give them a tune which will break them down," Mr. Quaver whispered to Miss Gamut, as he selected one with a tenor and treble duet, which he and Miss Gamut had sung together a great many times. Louder and stronger sang Mr. Quaver. Miss Gamut cleared her throat, with the determination to sing as she never sang before, and to show the people what a great difference there was between her voice and Azalia Adams's. But the excitement of the moment set her heart in a flutter when she came to the duet, which ran up out of the scale. She aimed at high G, but instead of striking it in a round full tone, as she intended and expected, she only made a faint squeak on F, which sounded so funny that the people down stairs smiled in spite of their efforts to keep sober. Her breath was gone. She sank upon her seat, covered her face with her hands, mortified and ashamed. Poor Miss Gamut! But there was a sweet girl behind her who pitied her very much, and who felt like crying, so quick was her sympathy for all in trouble and sorrow.

Mr. Quaver was provoked. Never was his nose so red and fiery. Determined not to be broken down, he carried the verse through, ending with a roar, as if to say, "I am not defeated."

The young folks now had their turn. There was a measure of time, the exact movement, the clear chord, swelling into full chorus, then becoming fainter, till it seemed like the murmuring of voices far away. How charming the duet! Where Mr. Quaver blared like a trumpet, Paul sang in clear, melodious notes; and where Miss Gamut broke down, Azalia glided so smoothly and sweetly that every heart was thrilled. Then, when all joined in the closing strain, the music rolled in majesty along the roof, encircled the pulpit, went down the winding stairs, swept along the aisles, entered the pews, and delighted the congregation. Miss Gamut still continued to sit with her hands over her face. Mr. Quaver nudged her to try another verse, but she shook her head. Paul waited for Mr. Quaver, who was very red in the face, and who felt that it was of no use to try again without Miss Gamut. He waved his hand to Paul as a signal to go on. The victory was won. Through the sermon Mr. Quaver thought the matter over. He felt very uncomfortable, but at noon he shook hands with Paul, and said, "I resign my place to you. I have been chorister for thirty years, and have had my day." He made the best

of his defeat, and in the afternoon, with all the old singers, sat down stairs.

Judge Adams bowed to Paul very cordially at the close of the service. Colonel Dare shook hands with him, and Rev. Mr. Surplice, with a pleasant smile, said, "May the Lord be with you." It was spoken so kindly and heartily, and was so like a benediction, that the tears came to Paul's eyes; for he felt that he was unworthy of such kindness.

There was one person in the congregation who looked savagely at him, — Miss Dobb. "It is a shame," she said, when the people came out of church, speaking loud enough to be heard by all, "that such a young upstart and hypocrite should be allowed to worm himself into Mr. Quaver's seat." She hated Paul, and determined to put him down if possible.

Paul went home from church pleased that the school had done so well, and grateful for all the kind words he heard; but as he retired for the night, and thought over what had taken place, — when he realized that he was the leader of the choir, and that singing was a part of divine worship, — when he considered that he had fifty young folks to direct

— and that it would require a steady hand to keep them straight, he felt very sober. As these thoughts, one by one, came crowding upon him, he felt that he could not bear so great a responsibility. Then he reflected that life is made up of responsibilities, and that it was his duty to meet them manfully. If he cringed before, or shrank from them, and gave them the go-by, he would be a coward, and never would accomplish anything. No one would respect him, and he would not even have any respect for himself. "I won't back out!" he said, resolving to do the best he could.

Very pleasant were the days. Spring had come with its sunshine and flowers. The birds were in their old haunts, — the larks in the meadows, the partridges in the woods, the quails in the fields. Paul was as happy as they, singing from morning till night the tunes he had learned; and when his day's work was over, he was never too wearied to call upon Daphne with Azalia, and sing till the last glimmer of daylight faded from the west, — Azalia playing the piano, and their voices mingling in perfect harmony. How pleasant the still hours with Azalia beneath the old elms, which spread out their

arms above them, as if to pronounce a benediction, — the moonlight smiling around them, — the dews perfuming the air with the sweet odors of roses and apple-blooms, — the cricket chirping his love-song to his mate, — the river forever flowing, and sweetly chanting its endless melody!

Sometimes they lingered by the way, and laughed to hear the grand chorus of bull-frogs croaking among the rushes of the river, and the echoes of their own voices dying away in the distant forest. And then, standing in the gravelled walk before the door of Azalia's home, where the flowers bloomed around them, they looked up to the stars, shining so far away, and talked of choirs of angels, and of those who had gone from earth to heaven, and were singing the song of the Redeemed. How bright the days! how blissful the nights!

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT-HAWKS.

MR. SHELL was proprietor of the New Hope Oyster Saloon. He got up nice game suppers, and treated his customers to ale, whiskey, and brandy. Philip loved good living, and often ate an oyster-stew and a broiled quail, and washed it down with a glass of ale, late at night in Mr. Shell's rooms, in company with three or four other boys. After supper they had cigars and a game of cards, till midnight, when Mr. Shell put out his lights and closed his doors, often interrupting them in the middle of a game. That was not agreeable, and so the young gentlemen hired a room over the saloon, fitted it up with tables and chairs, and organized a club, calling themselves "Night-Hawks." Philip was the chief hawk They met nearly every evening. No one could get into their room without giving a signal to those within, and they had a secret sign by which they knew each other in the dark.

At first they enjoyed themselves, playing cards,

smoking cigars, drinking ale, sipping hot whiskey punch, and telling stories; but in a short time the stories were not worth laughing at, the games of cards were the same thing over and over, and they wanted something more exciting.

It was the fall of the year. There was rich fruit in the orchards and gardens of New Hope, russet and crimson-cheeked apples, golden-hued pears, luscious grapes purpling in the October sun, and juicy melons. The bee-hives were heavy with honey, and the bees were still at work, gathering new sweets from the late blooming flowers. Many baskets of ripe apples and choicest pears, many a bunch of grapes, with melons, found their way up the narrow stairs to the room of the Night-Hawks. There was a pleasing excitement in gathering the apples and pears under the windows of the unsuspecting people fast asleep, or in plucking the grapes from garden trellises at midnight. But people began to keep watch.

"We must throw them off our track. I 'll make them think that Paul does it," said Philip to himself one day. He had not forgotten the night of Daphne's party, — how Paul had won a victory and he had suffered defeat. Paul was respected; he was

the leader of the choir, and was getting on in the world. "I 'll fix him!" said he.

The next morning, when Mr. Leatherby kindled the fire in his shoe-shop, he found that the stove would not draw. The smoke, instead of going up the funnel, poured into the room, and the fire, instead of roaring and blazing, smouldered a few moments and finally died out. He kindled it again, opened the windows to let in the air, but it would not burn. He got down on his knees and blew till he was out of breath, got his eyes filled with smoke, which made the tears roll down his cheeks. The shop was a mere box of a building, with a low roof; so he climbed up and looked into the chimney and found it stuffed with newspapers. Pulling them out, he saw a crumpled piece of writing-paper. He smoothed it out. "Ah! what is this?" said he; and, putting on his spectacles, he read, "North 69° East, 140 rods to a stake; South 87° West, 50 rods to an oak-tree."

"That is Paul Parker's figuring, I reckon. I always knew that Paul loved fun, but I did n't think he would do this!" said Mr. Leatherby to himself, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Good morning, Mr. Leatherby," said Philip, coming up at that moment. "What is the matter with your chimney?"

'Some of you boys have been playing a trick upon me."

"Who, I should like to know, is there in New Hope mean enough to do that?" Philip asked.

"Whose figuring do you call that?" Mr. Leatherby asked, presenting the paper.

"Paul Parker's, as sure as I am alive! You ought to expose him, Mr. Leatherby."

"I don't like to say anything against him. I always liked him; but I did n't think he would cut up such a shine as this," Mr. Leatherby replied.

"Appearances are deceptive. It won't do for me to say anything against Paul, for people might say I was envious; but if I were you, Mr. Leatherby, I 'd put him over the road," said Philip, walking on.

Mr. Leatherby thought the matter over all day, as he sat in his dingy shop, which was only a few rods from Mr. Chrome's, where Paul was painting wagons, singing snatches of songs, and psalms and hymns. Mr. Leatherby loved to hear him. It made the days seem shorter. It rested him when he was

tired, cheered him when he was discouraged. It was like sunshine in his soul, for it made him happy. Thinking it over, and hearing Paul's voice so round, clear, full, and sweet, he could n't make up his mind to tell anybody of the little joke. "After all, he did n't mean anything in particular, only to have a little fun with me. Boys will be boys," — and so Mr. Leatherby, kind old man that he was, determined to keep it all to himself.

When Paul passed by the shop on his way home at night, he said, "Good evening, Mr. Leatherby," so pleasantly and kindly, that Mr. Leatherby half made up his mind that it was n't Paul who did it, after all, but some of the other boys, — Bob Swift, perhaps, a sly, cunning, crafty fellow, who was one of Philip's cronies. "It would be just like Bob, but not at all like Paul, and so I won't say anything to anybody," said the mild old man to himself.

Miss Dobb's shaggy little poodle came out, barking furiously at Paul as he passed down the street. Paul gave him a kick which sent him howling towards the house, saying, "Get out, you ugly puppy!" Miss Dobb heard him. She came to the door and clasped the poodle to her bosom, saying, "Poor dear Trippee

Did the bad fellow hurt the dear little Trippee?" Then she looked savagely at Paul, and as she put out her hand to close the door, she seemed to clutch at Paul with her long, bony fingers, as if to get hold of him and give him a shaking.

Trip was n't hurt much, for he was out again in a few minutes, snapping and snarling at all passers-by. Just at dark he was missing. Miss Dobb went to the door and called, "Trip! Trip! Trip!" but he did not come at her call. She looked up and down the street, but could not see him. The evening passed away. She went to the door many times and called; she went to Mr. Shelbarke's and to Mr. Noggin's, but no one had seen Trip. She went to bed wondering what had become of him, and fearing that somebody had killed or stolen him.

But in the night she heard him whining at the door. She opened it joyfully. "Where have you been, you dear little good-for-nothing darling Trip?" she said, kissing him, finding, as she did so, that all his hair had been sheared off, except a tuft on the end of his tail. She was so angry that she could not refrain from shedding tears. The puppy shivered, trembled, and whined in the cold, and Miss

Dobb was obliged to sew him up in flannel. He looked so funny in his coat, with the tuft of hair waving on the end of his tail, that Miss Dobb laughed notwithstanding her anger. In the morning she went out to tell her neighbors what had happened, and met Philip.

"Good morning. I hope you are well, Miss Dobb," he said politely.

"Yes, I am well, only I am so vexed that I don't know what to do."

"Indeed! What has happened?"

"Why, somebody has sheared all of Trip's hair off, except a tuft on the end of his tail, which looks like a swab. It is an outrageous insult, for Trip had a beautiful tail. I would pull every hair out of the villain's head, if I knew who did it."

"Who was it that kicked your dog last night, and called him an ugly puppy?" Philip asked.

Miss Dobb remembered who, and her eyes flashed. Philip walked on, and came across Bob Swift, who had been standing round the corner of Mr. Noggin's shop, listening to all that was said. They laughed at something, then stopped and looked at Mr. Noggin's bees, which were buzzing and humming merrily in the bright October sun.

That night Mr. Noggin heard a noise in his yard. Springing out of bed and going to the window, he saw that a thief was taking the boxes of honey from his patent hives. He opened the door and shouted, "Thief! Thief!" The robber ran. In the morning Mr. Noggin found that the thief had dropped his hat in his haste. He picked it up. "Aha! 'Pears to me I have seen this hat before. Paul Parker's, as sure as I am alive!" he said. It was the hat which Paul wore in Mr. Chrome's paint-shop. Everybody knew it, because it was daubed and spattered with paint.

Mr. Noggin went to his work. He was a well-meaning man, but shallow-brained. He knew how to make good barrels, tubs, and buckets, but had no mind of his own. He put on his leather apron, and commenced driving the hoops upon a barrel, pounding with his adze, singing, and making the barrel ring with

"Cooper ding, cooper ding, cooper ding, ding, ding!
Cooper ding, cooper ding, cooper ding, ding, ding!
Cooper ding, job, job,
Cooper ding, bob, bob,
Heigh ho, — ding, ding, ding!"

Mr. Noggin was rattling on in that fashion when Miss Dobb, followed by Trip, entered the shop.

"Well, I declare! That is the first time I ever saw a pup with a shirt on," said Mr. Noggin, stopping and looking at the poodle sewed up in flannel. "That is Paul Parker's doings, — I mean the shearing," said Miss Dobb, her eyes flashing indignantly.

"Paul's work! O ho! Then he shears pups besides robbing beehives, does he?" said Mr. Noggin. He told Miss Dobb what had happened.

"It is your duty, Mr. Noggin, to have him arrested at once. You are under imperative obligations to the community as a law and order abiding citizen to put the sheriff upon his track. He is a hypocrite. He ought to be pitched out of the singing-seats head first." So Miss Dobb wound Mr. Noggin round her finger, and induced him to enter a complaint against Paul.

CHAPTER VI.

PAUL'S FRIENDS.

FOR five months Paul had been leader of the choir, and so faithfully were his duties performed, so excellent his drill, and so good his taste and mature his judgment, so completely were the choir under his control, that the ministers from the surrounding parishes, when they exchanged with Rev. Mr. Surplice, said, "What glorious singing they have at New Hope!" It was so good, that people who never had been in the habit of attending church hired pews, — not that they cared to hear Mr. Surplice preach and pray, but it was worth while to hear Azalia Adams and Daphne Dare sing a quartette with Paul and Hans, and the whole choir joining in perfect time and in sweetest harmony.

Paul believed that a thing worth doing at all was worth doing well. His heart was in his work. It was a pleasure to sing. He loved music because it made him happy, and he felt also that he and Azalia and Daphne and all the choir were a power

for good in the community to make men better. Farmer Harrow, who used to work at haying on Sunday, said it was worth a bushel of turnips any time to hear such sweet singing. So his hired man and horses had rest one day in seven, and he became a better man.

In the calm moonlight nights Paul often lay wide awake, hour after hour, listening with rapture to the sweet music which came to him from the distant woods, from the waterfall, from the old maple in front of the house, when the leaves, tinged with gorgeous hues, were breaking one by one from the twigs, and floating to the ground, from the crickets chirping the last lone songs of the dying year, and from the robins and sparrows still hovering around their summer haunts. It was sweet to think of the pleasant hours he had passed with Azalia and Daphne, and with all the choir; and then it was very pleasant to look into the future, and imagine what bliss there might be in store for him; — a better home for his mother in her declining years, — a better life for himself. He would be a good citizen, respected and beloved. He would be kind to all. He wished that all the world might be good

and happy. When he became a man, he would try and make people good. If everybody was as good as Azalia, what a glorious world it would be! She was always good, always cheerful. She had a smile for everybody. Her life was as warm and sunny and golden as the October days, and as calm and peaceful as the moonlight streaming across his chamber. Sweet it was to think of her, — sweeter to see her; sweetest of all to stand by her side and unite his voice to hers, and feel in his soul the charm of her presence. In his dreams he sometimes heard her and sat by her side.

Sometimes, while thus lying awake, watching the stars as they went sailing down the western sky, his thoughts went beyond the present into the unseen future, whither his father and grandfather had gone. They sang when on earth, and he thought of them as singing in heaven. Sometimes he gazed so long and steadily toward the heavenly land, that his eyes became dim with tears, so sweet and yet so sad the sounds he seemed to hear, — so near and yet so far away that land.

So the days went by, and the calm and peaceful nights, bringing him to October, — the glorious harvest month.

And now suddenly people looked shyly at him There were mysterious whisperings and averted faces. He met Squire Capias one morning on the street. "Good morning," said Paul; but the lawyer walked on without reply. He passed Miss Dobb's house. She sat by the front window, and glared at him savagely; and yet she seemed to smile, but her countenance was so thin, wrinkled, and sharp, and her eyes so fierce, her smile so fiendish, that it put him in mind of a picture he once saw in a horrible story-book, which told of a witch that carried off little children and ate them for breakfast. Paul thought that Miss Dobb would like to pick his bones. But he went on to his work, rejoicing that there were not many Miss Dobbs in the world.

While hard at it with his paint-brush, Mr. Ketchum entered. He was a tall, stout man, with black, bushy whiskers, and so strong that he could take a barrel of cider on his knees and drink out of the bunghole. He was a sheriff. The rowdies who fell into his hands said it was no use to try to resist Mr. Ketchum, for he once seized a stubborn fellow by the heels. and swung him round as he would a cat by the tail,

till the fellow lost his breath and was frightened half out of his wits.

"I have called in to ask you to walk up to Judge Adams's office on a matter of business," said Mr. Ketchum.

"With pleasure, sir," said Paul, who, now that he had become a surveyor of land, had been called upon repeatedly to give his testimony in court.

They entered Judge Adams's office, which was crowded with people. Mr. Noggin, Miss Dobb, Philip, and Bob Swift were there. A buzz ran round the room. They all looked upon Paul.

"You have been arrested, Paul, and are charged with stealing honey from Mr. Noggin's beehives. Are you guilty or not guilty?" said Judge Adams.

"Arrested! — arrested for stealing!" — Paul exclaimed, stupefied and astounded at the words of the judge. It was like a lightning-stroke. His knees became weak. He felt sick at heart. Great drops of cold and clammy sweat stood upon his forehead. Arrested! What would his mother say? Her son accused of stealing! What would everybody say? What would Azalia think? What would Rev. Mr. Surplice say? What would his class of boys in the

Sunday-school say, not about him, but about truth and honor and religion, when they heard that their teacher was arrested for stealing?

His throat became dry. his tongue was parched. His voice suddenly grew husky. His brain reeled. His heart one moment stood still, then leaped in angry throbs, as if ready to burst. He trembled as if attacked by sudden ague, then a hot flash went over him, burning up his brain, scorching his heart, and withering his life.

"What say you, are you guilty or not guilty?"

"I am innocent," said Paul, gasping for breath, and sinking into his seat, taking no notice of what was going on around him. He was busy with the future. He saw all his hopes of life dead in an instant, — killed by one flash. He knew that he was innocent, but he was accused of crime, arrested, and a prisoner. The world would have it that he was guilty. His good name was gone forever. His hopes were blighted, his aspirations destroyed, his dreams of future joy, — all had passed away. His mother would die of a broken heart. Henceforth those with whom he had associated would shun him. For him there was no more peace, joy, or comfort, —

nothing but impenetrable darkness and agony in the future. So overwhelmed was he, that he took no notice of Mr. Noggin's testimony, or of what was done, till he heard Judge Adams say: "There are some circumstances against the accused, but the testimony is not sufficient to warrant my binding him over for trial. He is discharged."

Paul went out into the fresh air, like one just waking from sleep, numbed and stupefied. The words of the judge rang in his ears, — "Circumstances against the accused." The accused! The prisoner! He had been a prisoner. All the world would know of it, but would not know that he was innocent. How could he bear it? It was a crushing agony. Then there came to him the words of the psalm sung on Sunday, —

> "My times are in thy hand,
> Why should I doubt or fear?
> My Father's hand will never cause
> His child a needless tear."

So he was comforted in the thought that it was for his good; but he could n't see how. He resolved to bear it manfully, conscious of his innocence, and trusting in God that he would vindicate his honor.

He went home and told his mother all that had happened. He was surprised to find that it did not shock her, as he supposed it would.

"I know you are innocent, Paul," she said, kissing him. "I am not surprised at what has happened. You are the victim of a conspiracy. I have been expecting that something would befall you, for you have been highly prospered, and prosperity brings enemies. It will all come out right in the end." Thus his mother soothed him, and tried to lift the great weight from his heart.

He was innocent, but half of the community thought him guilty. "He did it, — he did it," — said Miss Dobb to all her neighbors. What should he do? How could he establish his innocence? How remove all suspicion? Ought he to resign his position as leader of the choir? or should he retain it? But the committee of the society settled that. "After what has happened, you will see the propriety of giving up your position as leader of the choir," said they. "Also your class in the Sunday-school," said the Superintendent.

O, how crushing it was! He was an outcast, — a vile, miserable wretch, — a hypocrite, — a mean,

good-for-nothing fellow, — a scoundrel, — a thief, — a robber, — in the estimation of those who had respected him. They did not speak to him on the street. Colonel Dare, who usually had a pleasant word, did not notice him. He met Daphne Dare, but she crossed the street to avoid him. How terrible the days! How horrible the nights! He tossed and tumbled, and turned upon his bed. There was a fire in his bones. His flesh was hot. His brain was like a smouldering furnace. If he dropped off to sleep, it was but for a moment, and he awoke with a start, to feel the heat burning up his soul with its slow, consuming flame.

At evening twilight he wandered by the river-side to cool his fever, dipping his hand into the stream and bathing his brow. He stood upon the bridge and looked over the railing into the surging waters. A horrible thought came over him. Why not jump in and let the swollen current bear him away? What use was it to live, with his good name gone, and all the future a blank? He banished the thought. He would live on and trust in God.

He heard a step upon the bridge, and, looking up, beheld Azalia. She had been out gathering the

faded leaves of autumn, and late-blossoming flowers, in the woods beyond the river. "Will she speak to me?" was the question which rose in his mind. His heart stood still in that moment of suspense. She came towards him, held out her hand, and said, "Good evening, Paul."

"Then you do not turn away from me?"

"No, Paul, I don't believe that you are a thief."

Tears came to his eyes as he took her proffered hand, — tears which welled up from his heart and which saved it from bursting. "O Azalia, if you had turned from me, I should have died! I have suffered terrible agony, but I can live now. I am innocent."

"I believe you, Paul, and I shall still be as I have been, your friend. There is my pledge," she said, setting down her basket, and putting a frost-flower into a button-hole of his threadbare coat. Then, to make him forget that the world was looking coldly upon him, she showed him the flowers she had gathered, and the gorgeous maple leaves, — scarlet, orange, purple, and crimson, and talked of their marvellous beauty. And when, with a smile, she said "Good night," and went tripping homeward, his heart was so full of gratitude that he could not utter his

thanks. He could only say in his heart, "God bless her." It was as if he had met an angel in the way, and had been blessed. He stood there while the twilight deepened, and felt his heart grow strong again. He went home. His mother saw by the deep-settled determination on his face, by his calmness, and by his sad smile, that he was not utterly broken down and overwhelmed by the trouble which, like a wave of the sea, had rolled upon him.

"There is one who does not pass me by; Azalia 's still a friend," he said.

"There are several whom you may count upon as being still your friends," she replied.

"Who are they, mother?"

"God and the angels, my son."

So she comforted him, telling him that the best way to put down a lie was to live it down, and that the time would surely come when his honor and integrity would be vindicated.

When they kneeled together to offer their evening prayer, and when his mother asked that the affliction might work out for him an eternal weight of glory, he resolved that he would, with God's help, live down the lie, and wait patiently, bearing the igno-

miny and shame and the cold looks of those who had been his friends, till his character for truth and honesty was re-established. He was calm and peaceful now. Once more he heard sweet music as he lay upon his bed. Through the night the winds, the waterfall, the crickets, seemed to be saying with Azalia, "We are still your friends, — still your friends — your friends — your friends!"

CHAPTER VII.

IN A TRAP.

A KIND word, a look, a smile, a warm grasp of the hand by a friend in time of trouble, — how they remain in memory! Sometimes they are like ropes thrown to drowning men. The meeting between Paul and Azalia upon the bridge was a turning point in his life. He felt, when he saw her approaching, that, if she passed him by, looking upon him as a vile outcast from society, he might as well give up a contest where everything was against him. He loved truth and honor for their own sake. He remembered the words of his grandfather, that truth and honor are better than anything else in the world. Many a night he had heard the winds repeating those words as they whistled through the cracks and crevices of his chamber, rattling the shingles upon the roof, saying over and over and over again, Truth and honor, truth and honor. He had tried to be true, honest, and manly, not only to make himself better, but to help everybody else

who had a hard time in life; but if Rev. Mr. Surplice, Judge Adams, Colonel Dare, and all the good folks looked upon him as a thief, what was the use of trying to rise? There was one who was still his friend. Her sweet, sad smile followed him. He saw it all the time, by day and by night, while awake and while asleep. He felt the warm, soft touch of her hand, and heard her words. He remembered that God is always on the side of truth, and so he resolved to go right on as if nothing had happened, and live down the accusation.

But he could n't go on. "After what has happened, it is expedient that you should leave the choir till your innocence is established," said Deacon Hardhack, who was chairman of the singing committee, — a good, well-meaning man, who was very zealous for maintaining what he considered to be the faith once delivered to the saints. He carried on an iron foundery, and people sometimes called him a cast-iron man. He believed that it was the duty of everybody to do exactly right; if they did wrong, or if they were suspected of doing wrong, they must take the consequences. Miss Dobb told him that Paul ought to be pitched out of the choir. "I think

so too, Miss Dobb," said the Deacon, and it was done.

It required a great bracing of Paul's nerves, on Sunday morning, to go to church, and take a seat in the pew down stairs, with every eye upon him ; but he did it manfully.

The bell ceased tolling. It was time for services to commence, but there was no choir. The singers' seats were empty. Azalia, Daphne, Hans, and all the others, were down stairs. Mr. Surplice waited awhile, then read the hymn ; but there was a dead silence, — no turning of leaves, no blending of sweet voices, no soul-thrilling strains, such as had reformed Farmer Harrow, and given rest to his horses one day in seven. People looked at the singers' seats, then at Paul, then at each other. The silence became awkward. Deacon Hardhack was much exercised in mind. He had been very zealous in committee meeting for having Paul sent down stairs, but he had not looked forward to see what effect it would have upon the choir. Mr. Cannel, who owned a coal-mine, sat in front of Paul. He was not on good terms with Deacon Hardhack, for they once had a falling out on business matters, and so whatever the Deacon

attempted to do in society affairs was opposed by Mr. Cannel. They were both members of the singing committee, and had a stormy time on Saturday evening. Mr. Cannel did what he could to keep Paul in the choir, but the Deacon had carried the day.

"I 'll triumph yet," was the thought which flashed through Mr. Cannel's mind, when he saw how matters stood. He turned and nodded to Paul to strike up a tune, but Paul took no notice of him. Mr. Cannel half rose from his seat, and whispered hoarsely, "Strike up a tune, Paul." All the congregation saw him. Paul made no movement, but sat perfectly still, not even looking towards Mr. Cannel. Deacon Hardhack saw what Mr. Cannel was up to, and resolved to head him off. He rose from his seat, and said aloud, "Brother Quaver, will you pitch a tune?"

Again, as in other days, Mr. Quaver rubbed his great red nose, as trumpeters wipe their instruments before giving a blast. Then, after a loud Ahem! which made the church ring, he began to sing. It was so strange a sound, so queer, so unlike the sweet music which had charmed the congregation through

the summer, that there was smiling all over the church. His voice trembled and rattled, and sounded so funny that a little boy laughed aloud, which disconcerted him, and he came near breaking down. Miss Gamut sat in one corner of the church, many pews from Mr. Quaver. She attempted to join, but was so far away that she felt, as she afterwards remarked, like a cat in a strange garret. Paul did not sing. He thought that, if it was an offence for him to sing in the choir, it would be equally offensive to sing in the congregation. Azalia, Daphne, Hans, and all the members of the choir, who were sitting in the pews with their parents, were silent. They had talked the matter over before church.

"Paul is innocent; he has only been accused. It is n't right to condemn him, or turn from him, till we know he is not worthy of our confidence. I met him on the bridge last night, and he looked as if he had n't a friend in the world. I shall stand by him," said Azalia.

"Deacon Hardhack and Miss Dobb mean to break down the choir. It is a conspiracy," said Hans, who felt that Paul's case was his own.

Daphne began to look at the matter in a new light, and felt ashamed of herself for having passed by Paul without noticing him.

After service there was a great deal of loud talking.

"If that is the kind of singing you are going to have, I 'll stay at home," said Farmer Harrow.

"It would be a desecration of the sanctuary, and we should be the aiders and abettors of sin and iniquity, if we allowed a fellow who has been accused of stealing to lead the singing," said Deacon Hardhack to Mr. Cannel.

"Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone," was Mr. Cannel's reply, and he felt that he had given the Deacon a good hit.

"Paul has n't had his deserts by a long chalk," said Miss Dobb.

"He has been treated shamefully," said Azalia, indignantly.

All took sides, some for Paul, and some against him. Old things, which had no connection with the matter, were raked up. Mr. Cannel twitted Deacon Hardhack of cheating him, while on the other hand the Deacon accused Mr. Cannel of giving false

weight in selling coal. The peace and harmony of the church and society were disturbed.

Mr. Quaver felt very sore over that laugh which the little boy had started. He knew his voice was cracked, and that his singing days were over. "I am not going to make a fool of myself, to be laughed at," he said, and made up his mind that he would n't sing another note to please the Deacon or anybody else.

In the afternoon Mr. Quaver's seat was empty. Mr. Surplice read a hymn and waited for some one to begin. Mr. Cannel once more nodded to Paul, but Paul took no notice of it, and so there was no singing. A very dull service it was. After the benediction, Mr. Cannel, Colonel Dare, and Judge Adams said to Paul, "We hope you will lead the singing next Sunday."

"Gentlemen, I have been requested by the chairman of the committee to leave the choir. When *he* invites me to return I will take the matter into consideration; till then I shall take no part in the singing," — he replied, calmly and decidedly.

Through the week Paul went on with his business, working and studying, bringing all his will and energy

into action; for he resolved that he would not let what had taken place break him down.

Mr. Noggin believed him guilty. "He will steal your grapes, Mr. Leatherby, if you don't look out," he said to the shoemaker, who had a luxuriant vine in his garden, which was so full of ripe clusters that people's mouths watered when they saw them purpling in the October sun.

Mr. Leatherby concluded to keep his eyes open, — also to set a trap. He waited till evening, that no one might see what he was about. His garden was a warm, sunny spot, upon a hillside. A large butternut-tree, with wide-spreading branches, gave support to the vine. Mr. Leatherby filled a hogshead with stones, headed it up, rolled it to the spot, and tilted it so nicely that a slight jar would send it rolling down the hill. Then fastening one end of a rope to the hogshead, he threw the other end over a branch of the tree brought it down to the ground, and made a noose. Then, taking a board, he put one end upon the hogshead and rested the other end on the ground, where he had placed the noose. He expected that whoever came after the grapes would walk up the board to reach the great clusters which

hung overhead, that the hogshead would begin to roll, the board would drop, the noose draw, and the thief would find himself dangling by the heels. It was admirably contrived. About midnight Mr. Leatherby heard the board drop. "I 've got him!" he shouted, springing out of bed, alarming Mrs. Leatherby, who thought he was crazy. He had not told her of the trap.

"Got whom? Got what?" she exclaimed, wondering what he meant.

"Paul Parker, who has come to steal the grapes," he said, as he put on his clothes.

He went out, and found that it was not Paul, but Bob Swift, who was dangling, head downwards. The noose had caught him by one leg. A very laughable appearance he made, as he kicked and swung his arms, and swayed to and fro, vainly struggling to get away.

"So you are the thief, are you? How do you like being hung up by the heels? Are the grapes sweet or sour?" Mr. Leatherby asked, not offering to relieve him.

"Please let me go, sir I won't do so again," said Bob, whining.

"It won't hurt you to hang awhile, I reckon," Mr. Leatherby replied, going into the house and telling Mrs. Leatherby what had happened, then calling up Mr. Shelbarke, who lived near by, and also Mr. Noggin.

"I reckon that this is n't your first trick, Bob," said Mr. Leatherby, when he returned with his neighbors. He liked Paul, and had been loath to believe that he was guilty of stealing. "It is you who have been playing tricks all along. Come now, own up," he added.

"It ain't me, it is Philip, — he told me to come," said Bob, who was thoroughly cowed by the appearance of Mr. Noggin and the others, and who feared that he would be harshly dealt with.

"O ho! Philip Funk is at the bottom, is he? Mr. Leatherby exclaimed, remembering how Philip suggested that it was Paul who had stuffed his chimney with old paper.

"If you will let me down, I will tell you all," said Bob, groaning with pain from the cord cutting into his ankle.

"We will hear your confession before we let you down," said Mr. Leatherby.

Bob begged, and whined, but to no purpose, till he told them all about the Night-Hawks, — that Philip set them on, and that Paul did not take Mr. Noggin's honey, nor smoke out Mr. Leatherby. It was Philip who sheared Miss Dobb's puppy, who took Mr. Shelbarke's watermelons, and robbed Deacon Hardhack's hen-roost. When Bob had told all, they let him go. He went off limping, but very glad that he was free.

In the morning Mr. Leatherby and Mr. Noggin reported what had happened; but Philip put on a bold face, and said that Bob was a liar, and that there was n't a word of truth in what he had said. The fact that he was caught stealing Mr. Leatherby's grapes showed that he was a fellow not to be believed; for if he was mean enough to steal, he would not hesitate to lie.

Deacon Hardhack called upon Paul. "I have been requested by the committee to call and see you. They wish you to take charge of the singing again," he said, with some confusion of manner; and added, "Perhaps we were hasty in the matter when we asked you to sit down stairs, but we are willing to let bygones be bygones."

"Am I to understand that there is no suspicion against me?" Paul asked.

"Yes — sir — I suppose so," said the Deacon, slowly and hesitatingly.

"Then you may say to the committee that I will do what I can to make the singing acceptable as a part of the service," Paul replied.

There was a hearty shaking of hands with Paul, by all the choir, at the rehearsal on Saturday night. They were glad to meet him once more, and when they looked upon his frank, open countenance, those who for a moment had distrusted him felt that they had done him a great wrong. And on Sunday morning how sweet the music! It thrilled the hearts of the people, and they too were ashamed when they reflected that they had condemned Paul without cause. They were glad he was in his place once more. Mr. Surplice in his prayer gave thanks that the peace and harmony of the congregation was restored, and that the wicked one had not been permitted to rule. When he said that, Mr. Cannel wondered if he had reference to Deacon Hardhack. Everybody rejoiced that the matter was settled, — even Miss Dobb, who did not care to have all the old things brought up.

When the service was over, when Paul sat once more by his mother's side in their humble home, before the old fireplace, when he listened to her words, reminding him of all God's goodness, — how He had carried him through the trial, — Paul could not keep back his tears, and he resolved that he would always put his trust in God.

CHAPTER VIII.

KEEPING SCHOOL.

THE teacher of the New Hope school, engaged for the winter, proved to be a poor stick. He allowed the scholars to throw spit-balls, snap apple-seeds, eat molasses candy, pull each other's hair, and have fine frolics. Paul wished very much to attend school, to study Latin, and fit himself for College; but when he saw how forceless a fellow Mr. Supple was, he concluded that it would be lost time to attend such a school. He knew that knowledge is power, and he longed to obtain a thorough education. Sometimes, when he thought how much Judge Adams knew, and when he read books written by learned men, he felt that he knew next to nothing. But whenever he felt like giving up the contest with adverse circumstances, a walk in the fresh, cool, bracing air, or a night's sleep, revived his flagging spirit. The thought often came, "What would Daphne or Azalia say if they knew how chicken-hearted I am?" So his pride gave him

strength. Though he did not attend school, he made rapid progress studying at home.

Matters came to a crisis in the school, for one day the big boys — Bob Swift among others — carried Mr. Supple out of the school-house, dug a hole in a snow-drift, and stuck him into it with his head down and his heels up. Then they took possession of the school-house and played tag over the benches for the rest of the day. Mr. Supple did not attempt to enter the school-house again, but picked up his hat, went to his boarding-house, packed his trunk, and left town.

After a week's vacation, Mr. Cannel, who was the school-agent, obtained another teacher, — a thin, pale-faced, quick-tempered young man, — Mr. Thrasher. "I'll bring them to their trumps," he said, when Mr. Cannel engaged him.

"I intend to have order in this school. I shall flick the first boy who throws a spit-ball, or who does anything contrary to the rules of the school," said Mr. Thrasher, flourishing a raw hide, on the first morning. He read a long list of rules, numbered from one up to eighteen. Before he finished his rules, a little boy laughed, and caught a whipping

Before noon half a dozen were hauled up. There was a council of war at noon among the big boys, who, having had their own way, were determined to keep it. They agreed to give Mr. Thrasher a pitched battle. They had it in the afternoon; a half-dozen pounced upon the master at once, and after a short struggle put him out doors. They gave a grand hurrah, and pelted him with snowballs, and drove him up the street.

There was great commotion in the town. Those who loved law and order were alarmed for the welfare of their children.

"We must have a master who can rule them, or they will grow up to be lawless citizens," said Judge Adams.

Mr. Cannel could find no one who was willing to teach the school.

"I don't see why anybody who is competent to teach should be afraid to undertake the task," said Paul to Mr. Chrome, one day, as they talked the matter over.

Mr. Chrome met Mr. Cannel that evening on the street. "If there is anybody who is competent to keep the school, it is Paul Parker," said Mr. Chrome.

who had exalted ideas of Paul's ability to overcome difficulties.

"I believe you," Mr. Cannel replied, and started at once to see Paul.

"I will think of it, and let you know in the morning whether I will teach or not," was Paul's reply, after hearing what Mr. Cannel had to say.

He talked the matter over with his mother.

"It is a great undertaking, Paul; I cannot advise you," she said.

When he offered his evening prayer, he asked that God would direct him. He thought upon the subject during the night. Could he carry it through? The scholars all knew him, — had been to school with him, — were his old friends and playmates. Bob Swift was a ringleader; and outside, not in the school, was Philip, who would make all the trouble he could. There was Miss Dobb, who would like to have picked him to pieces. There were others who would rejoice to see him fail. But would it not be glorious to succeed, — to triumph over Miss Dobb? But that was an unworthy motive, and he put the thought out of his mind. He resolved to undertake the task, and try to do good, — to guide and mould the minds

of the scholars, — those who were to be men and women, who were to act an important part in life, and who were to live not only here, but in another world, — who, he hoped, would be companions of the angels. Would it not be worth while to aid in overcoming evil, in establishing law and order, — to inculcate a love of virtue, truth, and honor?

It would require nerve, energy, patience, and wisdom. "I 'll try it," he said to himself, after looking at all sides.

When it was known that Paul was going to try his hand at school-keeping the big boys chuckled. "We 'll sweeten him," said Bob, rubbing his hands, and anticipating the glorious fun they would have.

Conscious that he had a task before him which would try him severely, Paul yet went bravely to his work, locking the door as he entered the school-room, and putting the key in his pocket. The big boys looked at each other, somewhat amazed, each anxious to see what the others thought of it. He walked deliberately to his desk. "It is always best to begin an undertaking rightly," said Paul, standing erect and looking calmly round the room. "There is no better

way than to ask our Heavenly Father to direct us, and so we will all repeat the Lord's Prayer," he said and waited till the room was so still that the scholars could almost hear the beating of their hearts. The stillness filled them with awe. After prayer he addressed them, — not alluding to anything which had taken place, but simply saying that he had been employed to teach them, and should do what he could to make the school-room a pleasant place to all. He expected that they would obey whatever rules were necessary for the good of the school, but did not threaten them with punishment.

It was so unlike what they had expected that the big boys did not know what to make of it, or how to take it. Bob could not decide whether it was best to begin a war, or wait till something happened, and then have a grand battle. So the forenoon passed without any disturbance.

Philip saw Bob at noon. "You are a coward, Bob, or you would have pitched Paul heels over head out of the door. I would if I were there, and so would you if you had as much gumption as an old setting hen. I thought you were going to 'sweeten him,'" he said, with a sneer.

"So I am," said Bob, nettled at the taunt, and resolving to drive Paul out in the afternoon.

When Paul entered the school-room after dinner, he saw at a glance that there was mischief ahead. The whole school was on tip-toe. He locked the door, and again put the key in his pocket. Bob was standing in the middle of the floor with his hat on.

"Take off your hat, Master Swift, and go to your seat," said Paul.

"I sha'n't do it," said Bob, — who the next instant went spinning round the room, tumbling over a chair, falling upon the floor, finding himself picked up and thrown against a desk, then having his heels tripped up, and then set to whirling so fast that the room seemed all windows. He was cuffed backward and forward, to the right and the left, pitched headlong, and jerked back again so suddenly, that he lost his breath. He was like a little child in the hands of a giant. He was utterly powerless. One of the other boys sprang to help him, but was met by a blow between his eyes which knocked him to the floor. A second started, but when he saw what had happened he sat down Bob's brain was in a whirl. His ears were tingling. He saw stars, and

it seemed as if all his hair had been torn out by the roots. He heard Paul say, once more, calmly, as at first, "Take your seat, Master Swift." He hesitated a moment, but when, through the blinking stars, he saw how cool and decided Paul was, standing there as if nothing had happened, — when he saw the boy who had started to aid him sprawling on the floor, and the others who had promised to help put Paul out of doors sitting in their seats, — he knew that it was of no use to resist. He took his seat and sat all the afternoon wondering at Paul's strength. Paul was surprised to find himself so powerful and athletic; but then he remembered that he had right on his side, which always helps a man.

The victory was won. The school felt that he was their master. Yet he had a pleasant smile. When they were tired of study he said, "I see that you are getting dull and need stirring up." Then he told them a story which set them all laughing, and so made them forget that they were tired and sleepy.

At night he had a talk with Bob all alone, telling him that he ought to be a good boy for his poor old mother's sake. That touched Bob in a tender

place, for he loved his mother, and was a good-hearted fellow, but had allowed Philip to twist him round his little finger.

"For her sake, Bob, I want you to be good; I will help you all I can," said Paul. It was spoken so kindly and frankly that Bob knew Paul meant it. "Cut loose from those who advise you to do wrong, and tell them that you are going to do right," said Paul, as they parted for the night.

"I will," said Bob, who, as he thought it all over that night, and recalled the kind words, felt that Paul would be his best friend if he did right.

"I must get Azalia and Daphne to help me make a man of Bob," said Paul to himself, — "they can do what I can't."

He called upon Azalia. There was a bright fire on the hearth in the sitting-room, but the smile on her face, he thought, was more pleasant to see.

"I am glad you have conquered," she said.

"I don't know that I have done so, yet; when I can feel that they all love me, then I may begin to think that it is a victory. I have had a talk with Bob. He is a good fellow, but under bad influences. I want you to help me. If we can

make him respect himself, we shall make a man of him."

"I will do what I can," said Azalia.

When Paul went away she sat down by the window and watched him till he was out of sight. "How thoughtful he is for the welfare of others!" was the thought which passed through her mind. Then she gazed upon the red and purple clouds with gold and silver linings, and upon the clear sunset sky beyond, till the twilight faded away, and the stars came out in the heavens. Paul's words were ringing in her ears, — "I want you to help me." Yes, she would help him, for he was trying to make the world better.

CHAPTER IX.

RALLYING ROUND THE FLAG.

THERE came a gloomy day to the people of New Hope, — that gloomiest of the year, of all the years, — that on which they received the astounding intelligence that Fort Sumter had been attacked by the people of South Carolina, and that Major Anderson commanding it, with his little company, had been compelled to surrender. News so startling brought all the people into the streets. They assembled around the telegraph office, where Mr. Magnet read the despatch; how the attack had been made at daybreak on Friday, the 12th of April, all the batteries which General Beauregard had erected opening fire upon the half-starved garrison; how shot and shell were rained upon the fort, from Moultrie, from the guns on Morris Island, and from the floating battery which the Rebels had built; how Major Anderson coolly ate his breakfast; how Captain Doubleday fired the first gun in reply; how the cannonade went on all day, the great guns roar-

ing and jumping; how the fight commenced again next morning; how the barracks were set on fire by the shells from the Rebel guns; how manfully the garrison fought against the flames, rolling kegs of powder into the sea to prevent their exploding; how the soldiers were scorched by the heat and almost suffocated by the smoke; how the flag-staff was shot away; how the flag was nailed to the broken mast; how the brave little band held out till their powder was almost exhausted, and till there was nothing to eat but raw salt pork; how at last, after thirty-six hours' fighting, Major Anderson surrendered the fort, saluting his flag as he hauled it down, carrying it away with him, being permitted to sail with his company to New York; and how the President had called for seventy-five thousand men to suppress the rebellion. The people held their breath while Mr. Magnet was reading, and when he had finished looked at one another in mournful silence. The flag of their country was trailed in the dust, and dishonored in the sight of the nations. They could not have felt worse if they had lost a dear friend by death.

"The country is gone, gone, gone," said Judge Adams, wiping the tears from his eyes.

"I reckon not, Judge," said Colonel Dare, "the people will have something to say about this insult to the flag. They will wipe out the disgrace by sweeping those scoundrels into the sea." The Colonel usually looked on the bright side of things. He recalled the trainings of other days, when his regiment paraded on the green and had a sham-fight. He wished that he were once more in command; he would march to Charleston, burn the city, and sow it with salt.

"The question is, whether a sovereign State has not a right to secede if she chooses," said Mr. Funk, — for he and Philip were the only persons in New Hope who were not sorrowful over the intelligence. Mr. Funk was a native of Virginia, and had much to say about the superiority of Southern gentlemen over all other men, — how noble and chivalric they were.

"I am glad that the President has called for seventy-five thousand men to crush the vipers," said the Colonel.

"He can't do it. It won't be constitutional. You can't coerce a sovereign State," said Mr. Funk.

"We will do it. Let me tell you, Mr. Funk, that

this is a government of the people, -- the whole people, — and that the old flag which has been stricken from the walls of Sumter shall go up there, if it takes a million of men to put it there!"

"You can't do it. One Southerner can whip five Yankees any day," said Philip.

Colonel Dare took no notice of what Philip said. And he was too much depressed by the news to enter into an argument with Mr. Funk upon the right of a State to secede from the Union.

One by one the people went to their homes, meditating upon what they had heard, and wondering what next would happen. They could not work; they could only think of the terrible event.

What a gloomy day it was to Paul Parker! He went home, sat down before the fire, and looked into the glowing coals. The gun which his grandfather carried at Bunker Hill, and which in his hands had brought down many a squirrel from the highest trees, was hanging in its usual place. He felt like shouldering it and marching for Charleston. He recalled the stories which his grandfather had told him there upon the hearth, of Bunker Hill and Saratoga. Many times he had wished that he had lived in those

glorious days, to be a patriot, and assist in securing the independence of America. But now the work which his grandfather and the Revolutionary sires had accomplished seemed to be all lost. It made him sick at heart to think of it. Would the people resent the insult which South Carolina had given to the flag? What would the President do? What if he did nothing? What would become of the country? What would become of liberty, justice, truth, and right? O, how hard it was to see them all stricken down, — to think that the world was turning backward! He looked into the coals till he could see great armies meeting in battle, — houses in flames, and the country drenched in blood. He sat motionless, forgetful of everything but the terrible intelligence and the gloomy future. What part should he take in the contest? What could he do? The President had called for men to help raise the flag once more upon the walls of Sumter; could he leave his home, his mother, his friends? These were trying questions; but he felt that he could go wherever duty called him.

Colonel Dare, as he reflected upon what had happened, saw that the people needed stirring up

to sustain the President; that the Rebellion must be put down, or there would be an end of all government. He resolved to get up a public meeting. "We will have it this evening, and you must be chairman," he said to Judge Adams.

He called upon Rev. Mr. Surplice. "I want you to open the meeting by prayer," he said, "for these are sober days. We need God's help. If we ask Him, He will help us. And you must make a speech. Come down on the Rebels," he added, with sudden indignation; "curse them, as David cursed the enemies of God. You, who are watchman on the walls of Zion, must lead off, and the people will follow. Their hearts are burning within them; the kindlings are laid; strike the match now, and there will be such a flame of patriotism as the world never saw."

"We shall want singing," he said to Paul. "You must get that up."

He engaged Mr. Tooter to be there with his fife, and Mr. Noggin with his drum. These two were old companions on training days. They had drank many glasses of cider together, and had played "Yankee Doodle," and "The Campbells are coming," and

"Saint Patrick's Day in the Morning," on many occasions.

"We shall expect some resolutions and a speech from you," he said to Squire Capias.

Thus he laid out the work, and entered upon it with so much zeal, that all hands caught the spirit of his enthusiasm. Judge Adams, who had been very much depressed, became more cheerful, and thought over what he should say upon the occasion. Rev. Mr. Surplice looked through the Psalms and Isaiah and the New Testament to find the Scripture most appropriate to read. Squire Capias sat down by his round table in his dingy office, ran his fingers through his long black hair, and thought over his speech. Paul and Azalia, with Hans, went to Colonel Dare's, and, with Daphne, rehearsed the "Star-Spangled Banner," and "America," while Mr. Noggin put a new cord into his drum, which had been lying for months in his garret, and was covered with dust.

Evening came. The sexton rang the bell of the church, — not soberly and steadily, but he tugged with all his might at the rope, throwing the bell over and over, — ringing as if the whole town was in a blaze. The farmers out on the hills heard it, and

came driving furiously into the village to see what was the matter.

Mr. Tooter and Mr. Noggin, with Mr. Chrome, who had a new flag, walked out upon the parade-ground. The musicians struck up Yankee-Doodle. How it stirred the hearts of everybody, — the sharp, shrill notes of the fife, — the roll, the rattle, and the rat-a-tat-tat of the drum, and the clanging of the bell, and the sight of that flag, its crimson folds and fadeless stars waving in the evening breeze! Never had it looked so beautiful. The little boys swung their caps and cheered, the women waved their handkerchiefs, and the men hurrahed in an outburst of wild enthusiasm. Then they formed in procession with Colonel Dare for marshal, — the music and the flag in advance, Rev. Mr. Surplice, Judge Adams, and Squire Capias next, and then all the citizens, marching round the public square to the church, filling the house, the pews, the aisles, the entry, and hanging like a swarm of bees around the windows.

Judge Adams forgot all his despondency, while Mr. Surplice, who was getting a little prosy as a preacher, was as full of fire as in his younger days

Mr. Capias was so eloquent that the people stamped till the house fairly shook with applause. He ended with resolutions, pledging the support of the people of New Hope to the government, — their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor towards suppressing the Rebellion. But more thrilling than all the eloquence of the evening was the singing of the Star-Spangled Banner, by Azalia, Daphne, Paul, and Hans. They stood on the platform in front of the pulpit, Azalia and Daphne with flags in their hands. How sweet their voices! How inspiring the moment when they sang:

"And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

Men threw up their hats, women waved their handkerchiefs, and all cheered and shouted, while many shed tears, as they looked upon the banner of their country, which had been so insulted and despised. There, in the place where they met on the Sabbath to worship God, they resolved that, let it cost what it might of money, of sacrifice, or of life, the old flag should once more wave in triumph upon the walls of Fort Sumter, — that the Rebellion should be subdued and the traitors punished.

That was an ever memorable night to Paul. Alone in his chamber, lying on his bed, whence he could look out, as in childhood, upon the stars, he thought upon what had happened at Fort Sumter, and of the meeting in the church at New Hope, and how he had pledged himself with the rest to stand by the flag of his country. The water by the mill was repeating the soul-stirring song, which Azalia, Daphne, Hans, and himself had sung. The maples, elms, and all the forest-trees, like a multitudinous chorus of a great and mighty people, were saying, "It shall wave — shall wave — over the home of the brave!"

But men were wanted. The President had called for them. Ought he not to be one of the seventy-five thousand? Would not his grandfather, if alive, point to the old gun, and say, "Go, Paul, your country calls you?" Were not all who have died for liberty, justice, truth, and right calling upon him to do his duty? Were not the oppressed everywhere looking to him? What answer could he give to the millions yet to be, if in his old age they were to question him as to what part he bore in the great struggle? Thus the voices of the ages

propounded solemn questions — voices of earth and heaven — of his duty to his country and to God. But how could he leave his home, his mother, his friends, his school, the choir, Azalia, Daphne, Hans, and give up the dear associations of the place? What if he should fall in battle? Could he meet death face to face? But then he remembered that the path of duty, though it may lead through dangers, though it may lead to the death of the body, is the way by which peace comes to the soul. It was the most solemn moment of his life, for God was questioning him. He heard not only the voices of the past, and of the winds, the water, and of his country, calling him to do his duty as a patriot, but there was a still, small voice talking of sins committed and duties neglected; of a lie which he had told in childhood, and which had burned through all the years like a red-hot iron, leaving a crisped and blackened scar upon his soul. How could he be at peace? How ease the pain? Tears of anguish rolled down his cheeks. He turned and tossed in agony, wishing that the scar could be cut away, and that he could be made fit to dwell with the angels. But in his agony he heard another voice

saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

They were no longer tears of sorrow which wet his pillow, but of joy, for he saw that Jesus, having carried the cross up to Calvary, was able and willing also to bear his burden. What a friend, — to take away all his sin, and leave no scar, no pain, no sorrow! He would serve such a friend with his whole soul. He would do his duty, whatever it might be. For such a friend, he could go through all dangers and win his way to victory. For him he would live, and for him he would die, if need be, to save his country.

"Go, my son, — your country calls you, and God will take care of you," said his mother in the morning, when he told her that he thought it his duty to enlist.

"I have decided to be a volunteer, and shall spend a half-hour with the school and then dismiss it, and this will be my last day as a teacher," said Paul to the school committee, as he went for the last time to the school-house. It was hard to part with those who were dear to him. He had been so kind and gentle, and yet so firm and just, that all the scholars loved him.

"You may lay aside your books, I have not time to hear your lessons," — he said, and then talked of what had happened, — said that the flag had been insulted, that justice, law, religious liberty, truth, and right had been overthrown, and that, unless the Rebellion was put down, they would have no country, no home, — that God and his country called him, and he must go. The issues at stake were not only worth living for, but they were worth dying for, if they could be secured in no other way. It was a duty to fight for them. How hard it was to say "Good by!" They would meet again, but perhaps not in this world. His voice trembled; there was weeping around the room. When he dismissed them, they had no heart to play; they could only think how good and kind he was, and how great their loss; and in imagination, looking into the gloomy future, beheld him in the thickest of the fight upon the battle-field.

The whole country was aflame with patriotism. The drum-beat was heard not only in New Hope, but in every city and village of the land. There was a flag on almost every house. Farmers left their ploughs in the unfinished furrows; the fire of

the blacksmith's forge went out; carpenters laid down their planes; lawyers put aside their cases in the courts, — all to become citizen soldiers and aid in saving the country, — assembling in squads, companies, and regiments at the county-seats.

He called upon Rev. Mr. Surplice. "The Lord be with you, to guide, protect, and bless you," said the good man as he bade Paul farewell. It was a blessing and a benediction which followed Paul all the day, which comforted and strengthened him, when he reflected that he might be bidding a last farewell to his friends.

He was surprised to find that everybody was his friend; that all bade him God speed, — all, except Mr. Funk and Philip. It was evening when he called upon Azalia. He had shaken hands with Daphne and Hans, and others of his associates. The train would bear him away in the morning. Azalia came tripping down the path, holding out both hands to meet him at the gate. She greeted him with a sad smile. "You are not going away to the war, are you?" she asked with faltering voice.

"Yes, Azalia, and I have come to bid you good by!"

"Do you think it your duty to go and leave your mother? It will be hard for her to give you up; she will miss you very much, and we shall all miss you."

"I know that the old house will be lonesome, — that the days will be long and the nights dreary to my mother, — that she will listen to every approaching footstep and think perhaps it is mine. I know, Azalia, that possibly I may never return; I feel that perhaps this is the last time I may ever take you by the hand; but I feel that God and my country both are calling me, and that I must go."

"But what if you are killed on the battle-field! O Paul, it is dreadful to think of!"

"I would rather die there while doing what I feel to be my duty, than remain here shirking responsibility. Last night I heard the voices of the past calling me, and I seemed to see the myriads who are to come after us beckoning me. I know it is my duty to go. You would not have me falter, would you, Azalia?"

She could not reply. Her voice choked with emotion; she had not expected such a question. Tears

came into her eyes, and she turned away to hide them.

"I could not go without coming to see you, to thank you for all your kindness to me; you have been always a faithful and true friend. God bless you for all you have done for me! I know your goodness of heart, and I hope that, when I am gone, you will sometimes go in and comfort my mother, and shorten the hours for her; for your smile is always like the sunshine, and it will cheer her."

"I will do what I can to make her forget that you are gone."

"And you will not wholly forget me."

"I shall never forget you," she replied; then, looking steadily upon him, with a strong effort to keep down her emotion, said, "Paul, I have heard that there are many dangers in camp; that soldiers sometimes forget home and old friends, and become callous and hardened to good influences; that they lose sight of heaven and things holy and pure amid the new duties and strange excitements. But for the sake of those who respect and honor and love you, you will not give way to vice, will you? I know you will not, for my sake."

"For your sake, Azalia, if for no other reason, I will resist evil, and I will try to serve God and my country faithfully in all things, so that if I come back, or if I fall in battle, you will not be ashamed of having once been my friend."

She touched her sweet lips to his forehead, saying, "I have nothing else to give you for such a promise. Remember that it came from your old friend, Azalia."

His heart was full. He had braved himself to say farewell to all his friends without shedding a tear, but his courage was faltering. How could he go, perhaps never to return! He wanted to say more. He wanted to sit down at her feet and worship such goodness; but he could only dash away the tears, look for a moment into her eyes, drink in the sad smile upon her face, leave a kiss upon her cheek, press her a moment to his heart, and say, "God bless you, Azalia!"

He turned hastily away, and passed through the gate. He cast one glance behind, and beheld her standing in the gravelled walk, her chestnut hair falling upon her shoulders, and the setting sun throwing around her its golden light. She waved him an

adieu, and he passed on, thinking of her as his good angel. When far away, pacing his lonely beat at dead of night, he would think of her and behold her as in that parting hour.

CHAPTER X

A SOLDIER.

HE was a soldier in camp, wearing a blue uniform, sleeping in a tent, wrapped in a blanket, with a knapsack for a pillow. He had voluntarily given up the freedom of home, and was ready to yield obedience to military rule. He could not pass the guard without a permit. When the drum beat, he must spring to his feet. He was obliged to wear a knapsack, a cartridge-box, a canteen, and a bayonet scabbard, and carry a gun, not always as he would like to carry it, but as ordered by the officer in command. He was obliged to march hour after hour, and if he came to a brook or a muddy place, instead of turning aside and passing over on stepping-stones or upon a fallen tree, he must go through without breaking the ranks. His companions were not altogether such as he liked to associate with. Some were very profane, and used indecent language. There was one great, over-grown Dutchman, Gottlieb von Dunk, who smoked nearly all the time when

awake, and who snored terribly when asleep. But he was a good-hearted fellow for all that, and had a great many pleasant stories to tell.

It was inspiring to hear the drum and fife, the blast of the bugle, and the playing of the band. It was glorious to look upon the star-spangled banner, waving in the breeze; but the excitement soon wore away. There were rainy days, comfortless and cheerless. Sometimes the rations were not fit to be eaten, and there was grumbling in the camp. There were days of homesickness, when the soldiers longed to break away from the restraints of camp life, and be free once more.

The regiment in which Paul enlisted was ordered to Cairo, in Illinois, where it joined several others. When the men were enlisted, they expected to march at once upon the Rebels, but week after week passed by, spring became summer, and summer lengthened into autumn, and there was no movement of the troops. The ardor of their patriotism died out. It was a monotonous life, waking early in the morning to answer roll-call, to eat breakfast of salt pork and hard-tack, drilling by squads, by companies, by battalion, marching and countermarching, going through

the same manœuvres every day, shouldering, ordering, and presenting arms, making believe load and fire, standing on guard, putting out their lights at nine o'clock at night, — doing all this, week after week, with the Rebels at Columbus, only twenty miles down the river. It was very irksome. Sometimes Paul's heart went back to New Hope, as the dear old times came crowding upon him; but he had learned to be patient. He knew that it was necessary for soldiers to become disciplined. He had enlisted for the war, he gave his whole attention to doing his duty, and received his reward by being made a sergeant. He kept his gun clean, his equipments in good order, and he was always in his place. So prompt was he, that his commander nicknamed him Sergeant Ready. He was as ready to play a game of football, or to run a race, as he was to appear in the ranks at drill. When off duty, instead of idling away his time, he was studying the tactics, learning not only his duty as a sergeant, but what it would be if he were a lieutenant or a captain.

The camp of his regiment was near the town, on the bank of the Mississippi, where he saw the great steamboats pass down the Mississippi from St. Louis,

and down the Ohio from Louisville and Cincinnati, with thousands of troops on board, with the flags and banners streaming, the bands playing, and the soldiers cheering. It was pleasant to stand upon the levee, and behold the stirring scenes, — the gunboats commanded by the brave and good Admiral Foote, the great eleven-inch guns peeping from the portholes, — but Paul longed for active life. He rejoiced when he heard that his regiment was ordered to leave the Ohio River and go down toward Columbus on a reconnoitring expedition. The soldiers were so happy that they threw up their caps and gave a loud hurrah.

With their haversacks full of hard-tack and cold boiled beef, carrying their tin cups and plates, their cartridge-boxes full of cartridges, they embarked on one of the great steamboats, and floated down the river. They were exhilarated with the thought that they were to have new and untried experiences, — that perhaps there would be a battle. They paced the deck of the steamboat nervously, and looked carefully into the woods along the river-bank to see if there were any Rebel scouts lurking behind the trees.

Six miles below Cairo is a place called Old Fort Jefferson, where many years ago the white settlers built a fort, and where they had a battle with the Indians. The Essex gunboat, Captain Porter, was lying there, swinging at her anchors in the stream. A sailor paced the deck in a short blue jacket, who had a spy-glass in his hand, and kept a sharp look-out down the river, for there were two Rebel gunboats below in the bend.

The regiment landed on the Kentucky side, where a narrow creek comes down from the hills through a wild ravine. Suddenly there was a cry of "There they come! the Rebel gunboats." Paul looked down the river, and saw two dark-colored boats.

"Heave anchor! Put on steam. Light up the magazines. Pipe all hand to quarters! Lively!" were the orders on board the Essex.

The boatswain blew his whistle, the drummer beat the long roll, and the sailors, who had been dozing about the decks, were instantly astir, weighing the anchors, running out the great guns, bringing up shot and shell from the hold, and clearing the deck for action. The great wheels turned, and the Essex swung out into the stream, and prepared to meet

her antagonists. What an exciting moment! Paul felt the blood rush through his veins as he never felt it before. One of the approaching gunboats was suddenly enveloped in white smoke. He heard a screaming in the air, coming nearer and nearer, and growing louder and louder and more terrifying. He felt a cold chill creep over him. He held his breath. He was in doubt whether it would be better to get behind a tree, or lie down, or take to his heels. He could see nothing in the air, but he knew that a shot was coming. Perhaps it might hit him. He thought of home, his mother, Azalia, and all the old friends. He lived years in a second. "I won't run," he said to himself, as the iron bolt came on. Crash! it went through a great oak-tree, shivering it to splinters, and flying on into the woods, cutting off branches, and falling to the ground at last with a heavy *thug!* ploughing a deep furrow and burying itself out of sight. There was a roar of thunder rolling along the river-banks, echoing from woodland to woodland. Then the heavy eleven-inch gun of the Essex jumped up from the deck, took a leap backwards, almost jerking the great iron ringbolts from the sides of the ship, coming down with a jar which made her quiver

from stem to stern, sending a shell, smoking and hissing, down stream, towards the Rebel gunboat, and striking it amidships, throwing the planks into the water. "Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted the crew of the Essex. "Hurrah! Hurrah!" answered the soldiers on shore, dancing about and cheering Another shot came screeching towards them as loud as the first; but it was not half so terrifying. Paul thought it was not worth while to be frightened till he was hurt, and so he stood his ground, and watched the firing till the Rebel gunboats turned towards Columbus and disappeared behind the distant headland, followed by Captain Porter, who kept his great guns booming till he was almost within range of the Rebel batteries at Columbus. He was a brave man, short and stout, with a heavy beard. His father commanded the United States ship Essex in 1812, and had a long, hard fight with two British ships in the harbor of Valparaiso, fighting against great odds, till his decks were slippery with blood, till nearly all of his guns were dismounted, when he was obliged to surrender.

"The son is a chip of the old block," said Admiral Foote the next day to Captain Porter, commending

his watchfulness and promptness to meet the enemy. Paul saw how necessary it was in military operations to be always on the watch, and he felt that it was also necessary to be calm and self-possessed when on the battle-field.

The regiment took up its line of march, for a reconnoissance towards Columbus, along a winding path through the woods, passing log farm-houses, crossing creeks on log bridges. Paul noticed all the windings of the road, the hills, houses, and other objects, keeping count of his steps from one place to another, jotting it down on a slip of paper when the regiment came to a halt. They could not kindle a fire, for they were in the enemy's country, and each man ate his supper of hard-tack and cold beef, and washed it down with water from the creek.

Paul was sitting on a log eating his supper, and looking about for a place to spread his blanket for the night, when the Colonel of the regiment came to him and said: "Sergeant Parker, it is very important that a reconnoissance be made to-night towards the enemy's lines. I hear that you are a good, faithful, and trustworthy soldier. Are you willing to take it?"

"I have no desire to shirk any responsibility. If you wish me to go, I am ready," said Paul.

"Very well; gain all the information you can, and report at daybreak," said the Colonel.

He went out alone in the darkness, past the pickets. And now that he was alone, and moving towards the enemy, he felt that he was engaged in a hazardous undertaking. He walked softly, crouching down, listening to every sound; — on through deep and gloomy ravines, through the dense forests, past farm-houses, where dogs were howling, — noticing all the objects, and picturing them in memory.

"Halt! Who comes there?" shouted a voice. He heard the click of a gun-lock. It was a very dark night; stooping close to the ground, he could see an object by the roadside, immediately before him. He held his breath. What should he do? "Keep cool," said a monitor within. His heart had leaped into his throat, but it went back to its proper place. "Who comes there?" said the sentinel again.

Instead of answering, he moved backward so softly and noiselessly that he could not hear his own footsteps.

"What is the row?" he heard a Rebel officer ask of the sentinel.

"There is a Yankee prowling about, I reckon," said the sentinel in a whisper, and added, "There he is."

"Shoot him!" said the officer.

There was a flash which blinded Paul. He heard the Minie bullet sing above him. He could see the dark forms of the two men. He had a revolver in his hand, and could have shot them, but he was there to gain information, and not to bring on a fight.

"It is nothing but a stump, after all," said the officer.

The report of the gun re-echoed far and near. The night was still, and he could hear other pickets talking out in the field on his right hand and on his left. How fortunate! He knew where they were, and now could avoid them. But ought he not to turn back? He resolved not to be frightened from his object. After lying still awhile, he went back along the road, then turned aside, walked softly from tree to tree, careful not to crackle a twig beneath his feet, crept on his hands and knees through

the thick underbrush, and gained the road in the rear of the picket. Being inside of the enemy's lines, he knew that he could move more freely, for if any of the sentinels heard him they would think it one of their own number. He walked on, but suddenly found himself standing face to face with a dozen soldiers.

"Well, Jim, are there any Yankees down there?" one asked.

"The sentinel thought he saw a Yankee, but I reckon he fired at a stump," said Paul, passing boldly by them to their rear.

He now saw that he was in a Rebel camp. There were smouldering fires, tents, a cannon, baggage-wagons, and horses which were munching their grain. What should he do? He felt that he was in a critical situation. If taken, he would be hung as a spy. He stood still and reflected a moment, to calm his nerves. He had blundered in, perhaps he might get out. He would try; but as he was there, ought he not to improve the opportunity to find out all about the camp, how large it was, how many men there were? He counted the baggage-wagons and the tents. He almost stumbled over

a man who was wrapped in his blanket. It was an officer sound asleep, with his sword by his side. He was sleeping so deeply that Paul ventured to take the sword, for he thought, unless he carried something back as evidence, his report would not be believed. And then he crept back past the grand guard, and past the sentinels, sometimes crawling an inch at a time, then stepping as noiselessly as a cat in search of her prey, till he was past them all. He was surprised to find how cool and self-possessed he was, how clear his brain, and how wide awake were all his faculties. He was as light-hearted as a bird in spring-time, for even in the darkness, while he was dimly discerning what was around him, he saw Azalia, as he last beheld her in the gravelled walk before her home, waving him on! At daybreak he reached the lines once more. The Colonel heard his story, and was in doubt about its truth; but when he saw how accurate a map Paul drew, and that the sword was marked C. S. A., for the Confederate States of America, — when he saw how modest and straightforward Paul was in all that he did, — he said, "Sergeant Parker, I shall inform General Grant that you have done your duty faithfully."

CHAPTER XI.

SCOUTING.

"SERGEANT PARKER is hereby ordered to report immediately at General Grant's Headquarters," was the order which Paul received the next morning. He wondered what General Grant could want of him. He entered the General's tent, and saw a short, thick-set, middle-aged man with sandy whiskers, sitting at a table, reading letters and smoking a cigar. He was dressed in a plain blue blouse, and as he had no straps on his shoulders, Paul thought he was the General's orderly.

"Is General Grant about?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the man, looking up pleasantly.

"I should like to see him," said Paul.

"I am General Grant."

Paul was astonished to find a general so affable and pleasant, for he had seen some lieutenants and captains strut like turkey-cocks, because they wore straps on their shoulders. Paul saluted the General, and said, "I am ordered to report to you, sir."

"O yes; you are Sergeant Parker, who made a reconnoissance last night; sit down, Sergeant, till I finish my letters." It was spoken so pleasantly and kindly, that Paul said to himself, "He is a gentleman."

When the General had finished his letters he lighted another cigar, and questioned Paul about his adventures; how far it was to the Rebel camp, and how the camp was situated.

"I will give you a sketch of the place," said Paul; and, sitting up to the table, he drew a map, putting down the creeks, the roads, the woods, the distances from point to point, the place where he came upon the pickets, the position of the tents, and all the objects he saw. The General sat in silence, smoking, and looking at Paul with a keen eye. It was drawn neatly and quickly, and with an accuracy which surprised the General. Paul had kept count of his steps from one object to another. By looking up to the stars he had kept the points of the compass, and knew whether he travelled south, or southeast, or southwest, and so he was able to draw an excellent map.

"Where did you study topographical engineering?" the General asked.

"By the kitchen fire," Paul replied.

"A good college to graduate from, especially if a fellow has grit," said the General, smiling. "Are you willing to undertake a hazardous enterprise?" he asked.

"I am willing to undertake anything for my country," Paul replied.

The General then told him that he wished to obtain information about Fort Henry on the Tennessee River, and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland. He showed him the positions on a map, and said it was an undertaking of great importance, and which might cost him his life. "I will give you a trustworthy companion," said he.

"I would rather attempt it alone, if you please. Two is one too many; it doubles our risk. If discovered by the Rebels, I could n't help my comrade, neither could he help me. If we keep together, we shall have the same information. I think I shall succeed better alone," said Paul.

"You are right," said the General, who told him that he might prepare for the trip, and that he would be sent up the Tennessee River on a gunboat, and put on shore a few miles from Fort Henry, and that

he must return in ten days. "I hear a good report of you, and have confidence in you. I desire accurate information; for if it is not accurate, it may lead to very disastrous results," said the General.

Two nights later, Paul stood alone on the bank of the Tennessee. The gunboat which had brought him was going back. He could hear the plashing of her wheels growing fainter each moment. He was in the enemy's country, on an undertaking which might cost him his life. If discovered, he would be hung. For an instant his heart failed him, and he felt that he must turn back; then he remembered that he had enlisted in the service of his country, to do his duty, whatever it might be. His duty was before him. He was upon the ground. Would not God take care of him? Was not the path of duty, although it might lead to death, the only path of safety? There are times when duty is worth more than life. "Whatever is right before the Eternal God, that I will do," said Paul to himself. His fear was gone. He resolved to be bold, yet cautious, and to keep his thoughts perfectly collected under all circumstances. He had succeeded in one reconnoissance, which made him hopeful; but he reflected

that success often makes men careless, so he resolved to be always on his guard. He had changed his uniform for a pair of old butternut-colored pantaloons, a ragged coat, and a slouched hat which had a hole in the crown. He hardly recognized himself he was so altered in appearance. He wondered if Azalia or Daphne would know him. He had no weapon or equipments. There was nothing about him which indicated that he was a soldier of the Union army ready to lay down his life for the old flag.

He walked cautiously along the winding path, noticing all the objects; looking up to the north star at every turn of the road, keeping tally of his steps that he might know the distance travelled He walked stealthily, expecting every moment to hear the challenge of the Rebel pickets. He was startled by the cry, "Who! Who! Who!" He came to a sudden halt, and then laughed to think that he had been challenged by an owl.

In the morning he came upon a party of men cutting wood, and found that they were Rebel soldiers outside of the picket line. Paul took an axe and went to work, and so became one of them. When

they went into camp he accompanied them, carrying the axe on his shoulder, thus passing the picket as a wood-chopper. He found three or four thousand soldiers at Fort Henry, hard at work, throwing up breastworks, digging ditches, hewing timber, mounting guns. He worked with them, but kept his eyes and ears open, noticing the position of the fort on the bank of the river, and how many guns there were. He found out what troops were there, where they came from, and who commanded them. He learned that a wagon-train was going to Fort Donelson after ammunition. He joined it and passed the picket as one of the train guards. As the wagons were empty, he had a chance to ride, and thus saved a weary walk of twelve miles.

The little town of Dover, which is near Fort Donelson, he found alive with troops; regiments were arriving from Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Tennessee. General Pillow was there in command. He was once an officer in the army of the United States and fought in Mexico. General Floyd was there with a brigade of Virginians. He was Secretary of War when Buchanan was President, and did what he could to destroy the Union. He was a thief as

well as a Rebel. He was a large, coarse man. Paul despised him, and could hardly restrain himself from knocking the villain from his horse when he saw him ride by wearing the uniform of a traitor. There was not much discipline in the Rebel army, and Paul found little difficulty in going through all the camps, ascertaining what regiments were there. It nettled him to hear the boasts of the soldiers that one Southerner could whip five Yankees, but he said nothing for fear of betraying himself. He obtained food at a sutler's tent. He was very tired and sleepy when the second night came, but he found a place to sleep at a house in the village.

"What regiment do you belong to?" asked a girl with a sallow countenance and grimy hands.

"I am a scout," said Paul.

"Be you a scout? Wal, I hope you will run across Old Abe Linkum. If you do, jest take his *skelp* for me." (She meant his scalp.)

"Wal, if I *cotch* him, I reckon I 'll *skelp* him," said Paul, flourishing his knife, as if he was ready for such bloody work.

"The Yanks are a set of vagabonds; they are the meanest critters on airth," said the woman. "They 'll hang you if they cotch you."

"I reckon I won't let 'em cotch me," said Paul.

"Where be you gwine next?"

"Down to Cairo, I reckon; though I go wherever the General sends me."

"May be you would do a little chore for me, — get me some pins, needles, and thread?"

"It is mighty skittish business, but I 'll see what I can do," said Paul.

Having obtained his information, his next business was to get away. He waited till the lights were put out in the camps at night, then, walking down to the river he found a small boat, jumped in and pushed out into the stream. He could see the sentinels on the parapet of the fort as he floated past, but they did not discover him. Paul congratulated himself that he was beyond the picket line when he heard a hail from both shores at the same time. "Boat ahoy!" He made no reply. "Boat ahoy! come ashore or I 'll fire," said both sentinels. He saw that he could not escape by rowing. They would fire if he attempted to go ahead or turn back. If he went ashore, he would be taken to the guard-house, questioned, probably put into prison, perhaps tried as a spy. He resolved that he would n't go

ashore. There was no time for deliberation. It was mid-winter; the air was keen, and there was floating ice in the river. If he remained in the boat he might be shot, so he lowered himself noiselessly into the water. How cold it was! He felt the chill strike through him, setting his teeth to chattering, and his limbs quivering. There was another hail, and then a flash on both shores. The balls went through the boat. He heard the stroke of oars, and saw a boat pushing out from the shore. He darted ahead, swimming noiselessly down stream, gradually nearing the shore, for his strength was failing. He heard the men in the boat say, "We are fooled, it is only an empty dug-out."

How hard it was to climb the bank! He could not stand, he was so chilled. Once he rose to his feet, but tumbled like a log to the ground. He wanted to go to sleep, but he knew it would be his last sleep if he yielded. He drained the water from his boots, rubbed his legs, thrashed his hands, and then went reeling and blundering in the darkness over fallen trees. What a wearisome, cheerless night it was! How he longed for a fire, — a cup of warm coffee, — a comfortable bed! He thought of his own

bed in the little old house at New Hope, and wished that he might lie there once more, and snuggle down beneath the warm comforters. His clothes were frozen, and notwithstanding he beat his hands till the blood dripped from his fingers, he could get up no warmth. "Halt! Who comes there?" was the sharp challenge which startled him from his dreaming. He was close upon a picket. He turned in an instant, and began to run. He heard footsteps following. The thought that he was pursued roused all his energies. The footsteps came nearer. Putting forth all his strength, holding his breath, Paul went on, stumbling, rising again, leaping, hearing the footsteps of his pursuer coming nearer; suddenly he came to a deep, narrow creek. He did not hesitate an instant, but plunged in, swam to the other bank, gained the solid ground, and dropped behind a tree just as his pursuer reached the creek. The Rebel stopped and listened, but Paul remained perfectly still, hardly daring to breathe, till he heard the fellow go back muttering to himself and cursing the creek. The running had warmed Paul, but he was exhausted and drenched once more. Daybreak came, and he did not dare to travel; so, finding some

stacks of corn in a field, he tore one of them open, made a bed inside, drew the bundles over him, shivered awhile, and then dropped asleep.

He awoke suddenly to find his house tumbling to pieces, — torn down by Rebel soldiers.

"Hello! What's here? Who be ye? What are ye up to?" said a sergeant, startled to find a man under the bundles. "Deserter, eh? or a spy, I reckon," said the fellow, holding a pistol to Paul's head.

"Better put up your shooting-irons," said Paul coolly.

"Give an account of yourself, how ye came here, *whar* ye have been, and *whar* ye gwine."

Paul noticed that he said *whar* for where, and replied, "I am a scout, and have been down by the river *whar* the Yankee gunboats is."

"I don't believe it; you look like a scarecrow, but I reckon you are a Yankee spy," said the Sergeant. He searched Paul, but found nothing. He was commanding a cavalry foraging-party, and was a brutal, ignorant fellow, and had been drinking whiskey, and wanted to show that he had power. "Boys, bring a halter; I reckon I 'll make this fellow confess that he is a Yankee."

A soldier brought a rope; one end was thrown over the limb of a tree, and the other made into a slip-noose, and put round his neck; but he did not flinch. To confess that he was a spy was sure death. He was calm. For a moment his thoughts went back to his home. He thought of his mother and Azalia; but there was little time for such reflection. He did not feel that his work was done. "Wal, Sergeant, what be you gwine to do?" he asked.

"Hang you as a spy," said the Sergeant.

"What sort of a report will you make to the General? What do ye think he will do to you when he finds that you have hung one of his scouts?" Paul asked.

"See here, Sergeant, I reckon your are a leetle too fast in this matter," said one of the soldiers.

Paul saw that the time had come for a bold course on his part. He had already ascertained what regiment of cavalry they belonged to. He had seen their Colonel at Dover. "What do you suppose Colonel Forrest will say, when he hears of this proceeding of yours?" he asked.

The Sergeant started at the mention of the name of his commander, and began to see the proceeding in a new light. Paul threw the noose from his neck

and said, in a tone of authority: "I will report you, sir. I will have you arrested. I 'll teach you to do your duty better than this. I am an officer. I know General Pillow, General Floyd, General Buckner, and Colonel Forrest. I am out on important business. You found me asleep, and instead of taking me to your superior officer, as you ought to have done, you proceed to hang me. You are drunk, sir, and I 'll have you punished."

The Sergeant was very much frightened. He saw how noble a countenance Paul had, and felt his tone of authority. "I did n't mean any harm, sir; I wanted to do my duty," said the Sergeant, taking off his hat, and holding down his head.

"Because you are a sergeant, you wanted to show your authority," said Paul. "Now go about your business, all of you, and when I get to General Pillow's head-quarters I will see to your case."

The soldiers who had gathered round started off at once to their work, while Paul walked towards Fort Donelson. He had gone but a few steps, when the Sergeant followed him, and, taking off his hat, said, "Please, Colonel, don't be too hard on me, I won't do so again."

"It will be my duty to report you; but if you will

promise to be more careful in the future I will tell the General when I make my report not to be too hard," said Paul.

"I 'll be more *keerful* next time, and won't get drunk again, Colonel, never."

"Very well," said Paul, walking on till he reached a piece of woods; then, turning from the path, he made his way towards the river again, wondering at his escape. He had a long walk through the woods, but when he reached the gunboats lying in the stream, how his heart leaped for joy!

He kept all he had seen so well in memory, that when he reached Cairo he was able to draw an accurate plan of the forts and country around them.

General Grant listened to his story with great interest, and when Paul had finished said, "You have performed your work acceptably; you understand topography; I wish to keep you at my head-quarters, and therefore appoint you a Lieutenant of Engineers."

It was so unexpected a promotion, and such an expression of confidence, that Paul was very much confused, and could only say, while blushing very red, "I thank you, sir."

CHAPTER XII.

MISSED FROM HOME.

HOW lonesome it was in New Hope through all these days! Everybody missed Paul. He was missed by the school-children, for the teacher who succeeded him was cross and harsh, while Paul was always kind and pleasant. He was missed by the congregation on Sunday, for although Hans did his best as leader of the choir, he could not fill Paul's place. He was missed by his mother, who, through the long, wearisome days and lonely nights, thought only of him, her pride, her joy, her hope. How good Azalia was to visit the Post-office every morning to get the letters which Paul wrote to his mother, often finding one for herself! How pleasant to read what he wrote of life in camp! How thrilling the narrative of his adventures, his visit to the forts, his narrow escapes! As she read it, her heart stood still while the letter was wet with tears. What if the rebels had hung him! It was terrible to think of. What could she do to comfort him? How help him,

— how relieve his sufferings and hardships? She would knit him a pair of gloves and stockings. But his comrades needed them as well as he. Why not ask Daphne to help? Why not ask all the girls to do something? So she thought the matter over 'hrough the long winter nights, planning a soldiers' sewing and knitting society.

Pleasant gatherings they had in the vestry of the church on Wednesday afternoons working for the soldiers. Azalia's cheeks were flushed with rare beauty when she read Paul's letters to them with trembling voice. There were many moist eyes, for all felt that, if he and his comrades were undergoing such hardships and dangers for them, that they might have a home and a united country, they ought to do all they could in return; and so, while knitting stockings for the soldiers, their hearts were knit in deeper love and devotion to their country.

But they had something besides Paul's adventures to talk about; for one Monday morning when Mr. Bond, the town treasurer, opened his office, he found that it had been entered by robbers, who had stolen all the money, — several thousand dollars. It was soon discovered that Philip Funk was missing The

sheriffs and constables set themselves to hunt him up. They got upon his track, followed him to the Ohio River, and across into Kentucky; but he was too swift for them, and succeeded in getting into the Rebel lines with the stolen money. Notwithstanding he was a robber, his sister Fanny held her head as high as ever. She did not attend the soldiers' aid society. She hoped that the South would succeed in establishing its independence, and was glad that Philip had gone to help the Southern soldiers. "I hope he will come across Paul," said Fanny to Daphne Dare one day.

"So do I, and I hope that Paul will shoot him," said Daphne, with flashing eyes. She had the spirit of her father, and added, "He is a traitor and a robber, and I hope somebody will shoot him."

Fanny spit at the flag which hung over the street every time she passed it, to show her hatred of it. Daphne was very indignant, and proposed to her associates that they should compel Fanny to wave the stars and stripes; but Azalia said it would be a severer punishment to take no notice of her. "We might make her wave the flag, but that would not make her love it, and such forced loyalty would be of no value."

So, acting upon Azalia's advice, all of the girls passed her by, taking no notice of her on the street, at the Post-office, or in church, not recognizing her by word or look. Fanny bore it awhile with a brazen face, but soon found it hard to have no one to speak to. The great want of the human heart in time of trouble is sympathy. Our wills may bear us up awhile, but sooner or later we must unburden our feelings, or feel the burning of a slow consuming fire, destroying all our peace and happiness. The days were cheerless to Fanny. If she walked out upon the street, she saw only the averted faces of her former friends. They would not speak to her, and if she addressed them they turned away without answering, — avoiding her as if she was infected with the plague. When the cold northeast storms came, when the clouds hung low upon the hills, when the wind howled in the woods, when the rain pattered upon the withered leaves, how lonesome the hours! She was haughty and self-willed, friendless and alone; but instead of becoming loyal and behaving like a good, sensible girl, she nursed her pride, and comforted herself by thinking that her great-grandfather Funk was a fine old Virginian gentleman. If a still,

small voice whispered that it was mean and wicked in Philip to take money which did not belong to him, she quieted her conscience by the reflection that it was right for the Rebels to do all the damage they could to their enemies in securing their independence. When the storm was loudest, she rejoiced in the hope that some of the Yankee ships would be wrecked, or that the Mississippi River would overflow its bank and drown the Yankee regiments in their camps.

Not so did Azalia listen to the storm. When the great drops rattled upon the roof and dashed against the windows, she thought of Paul and his comrades as rushing into battle amid volleys of musketry; the mournful sighing of the wind was like the wailing of the wounded. She thought of him as marching wearily and alone through the dismal forest to perform deeds of daring; she thought of him as keeping watch through the stormy nights, cold, wet, hungry, and weary; not for glory, or fame, or hope of reward, but because it was his duty. And these were not sad hours to her.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MARCH.

ON Wednesday, the 12th of February, 1862, Paul found himself once more upon the road leading from Fort Henry to Fort Donelson, not now alone, but guiding an army of fifteen thousand men, with forty pieces of artillery. He was on horseback, and sat so well in the saddle that the cavalrymen said he rode like an old trooper. He was in uniform, and wore straps on his shoulders, and was armed with a sword and a revolver. He rode in advance of all, looking sharply into the thickets and down the ravines, to see if there were any Rebels in ambush.

The sharpshooters followed him. They wore gray jackets and skull-caps, and were armed with rifles and long hunting-knives. They were famous hunters, and could shoot a deer upon the run, or bring down a prairie-chicken upon the wing. They were tough, hearty, jolly, courageous, daring fellows. They were in good spirits, for the rebels had fled in dismay from

Fort Henry when the gunboats sent their shells into the fort.

It was a hard march, for the roads were muddy, and they were obliged to wade through creeks although it was midwinter. Paul noticed one brave fellow among them, whose feet were so sore that his steps were marked with blood, which oozed from a hole in the side of his shoe, and yet the man kept his place in the ranks.

"Let me carry your gun," said Paul, and so, taking it across his saddle, helped the soldier. "You ought to be in the hospital," said Paul.

"I can't stay behind if there is to be any fighting," said the soldier, thanking Paul for his kindness; and then, in a low tone, the soldier said to his comrade, "There a'n't many officers like him who will help a fellow."

At sunset the army halted in the woods beside a brook. Tents had been left behind, and the soldiers had no shelter from the wintry air. They cut down great trees and kindled huge fires. The farmers in that part of the country had large herds of pigs, which roamed the woods and lived on nuts. The soldiers had lived on salt meats for many months,

and, notwithstanding orders had been issued against committing depredations, they were determined to have a good supper. Crack! crack! crack! went their rifles. Some, instead of shooting, tried to catch the pigs. There were exciting chases, and laughable scenes, — a dozen men after one pig, trying to seize him by the ears, or by the hind legs, or by the tail.

They had a charming time, sitting around the roaring fires, inhaling the savory odors of the steaks and spareribs broiling and roasting over the glowing coals on forked sticks, and of the coffee bubbling in their tin cups. The foot-sore sharpshooter whom Paul had helped on the march cooked a choice and tender piece, and presented it to Paul on a chip, for they had no plates. It was cooked so nicely that Paul thought he had never tasted a more delicious morsel.

In the morning they had an excellent breakfast, and then resumed the march, moving slowly and cautiously through the woods, but finding no enemy till they came in sight of Fort Donelson.

Paul had guided the army to the fort, but now he had other duties to perform. He was required to make a sketch of the ground around the fort, that General Grant might know where to form his

lines. — on what hills to plant his cannon, — where to throw up breastworks for defence, should the rebels see fit to come out and attack him. Leaving his horse behind, Paul began his dangerous but important work on foot, that he might make an accurate map, — examining through his field-glass the breastworks of the rebels, counting their cannon, and beholding them hard at work. When night came he crept almost up to their lines. He was between the two armies, — a dangerous position, for the pickets on both sides were wide awake, and his own comrades might fire upon him before he could give the countersign. Although he stepped lightly, the sticks sometimes crackled beneath his feet.

"Halt! Who goes there?" shouted a Rebel picket directly in front of him. It was so sudden, and he was so near, that Paul's hair stood on end. He darted behind a tree. Click! flash! bang! and a bullet came with a heavy *thug* into the tree. Bang! went another gun, — another, — and another; and the pickets all along the rebel lines, thinking that the Yankees were coming, blazed away at random. The Yankee pickets, thinking that the rebels were

advancing, became uneasy and fired in return. Paul could hear the bullets spin through the air and strike into the trees. His first thought was to get back to his comrades as soon as possible; then he reflected that it would be dangerous to attempt it just then. The firing woke up all the sleepers in the two armies. The drums were beating the long roll, the bugles were sounding, and he could hear the Rebel officers shouting to the men, "Fall in! fall in!" He laughed to think that the crackling of a stick had produced all this uproar. He wanted very much to join in the fun, and give the Rebel picket who had fired at him a return shot, but his orders were not to fire even if fired upon, for General Grant was not ready for a battle, and so, while the Rebels were reloading their guns, he glided noiselessly away. When he heard the bullets singing he expected to be hit; but as he was less than six feet high and only eighteen inches across his shoulders, and as it was dark and the soldiers were firing at random, he calculated that there was not one chance in a million of his being injured, and so through the night he went on with his reconnoissance along the lines, and completed the work assigned him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BATTLE.

IN the morning he found General Grant in a little old farm-house, where he had established his head-quarters. He appeared to be pleased with the map which Paul made of the ground, and said to Major Cavender, who commanded the regiment of Missouri Artillery, " Place your guns on that hill, and be ready to open upon the fort." He issued orders to General McClernand to go round to the southwest side of the town; to General Wallace, to hold the centre of the line, west of the town; and to General Smith, to be ready to storm the fort on the northwest side.

It was a beautiful morning. The air was mild, and the birds sang in the trees though it was midwinter. The sharpshooters ate their breakfast before sunrise, and began the battle by exchanging shots with the Rebel pickets. Though Paul had been up all night, there was no time for rest. He was sent with orders to the artillery officers, — to Captain Taylor,

Captain Dresser, and Captain Schwartz, telling them where to place their guns. As he rode over the hills and through the ravines, he passed the sharpshooters. Their rifles were cracking merrily. Among them was the soldier whom Paul had helped on the march. The soldier saluted him. Paul saw that he was not only foot-sore, but also sick.

"You are not fit to go into battle; you ought to report to the surgeon," said Paul.

"I would n't miss of being in this scrimmage that we are going to have to-day for the best farm in Illinois," said the soldier.

Just then, the rebel cannon opened, and the shells came crashing through the front. Major Cavender had wheeled his guns into position, and was sighting them. One of the shells struck at his feet, and ploughed a deep furrow in the ground. Another struck a poor fellow in the breast, whirled him into the air, spattering his blood upon those who stood around, killing him instantly. As Paul beheld the quivering flesh, the sight filled him with horror, and made him sick at heart. Such might be his fate before the day was done. He thought of home, — of his mother, of Azalia, and of the dear friends

far away. He thought also of God, and the hereafter; but remembered that he was in the keeping of his Heavenly Father. He was there to do his duty, and if he was to meet with death, would meet it resolutely; and so, regaining his composure, rode calmly along the lines, acting as aid to General Grant doing the duties assigned him.

The battle lasted through the day, but the fort was not taken. The gunboats which were to sail up the Cumberland River had not arrived, and the provisions which the troops brought from Fort Henry were nearly exhausted. The day which had been so bright and beautiful was succeeded by a dreary night. The wind blew from the northeast. A rainstorm set in, which changed to snow, and became one of the severest storms ever known in that section of the country. It was a terrible night for the wounded. They had no protection from the storm. Hundreds had fallen during the day. Some were lying where they fell, close up under the Rebel breastworks, amid the tangled thickets, the blood oozing from their wounds and staining the drifting snow. It was heart-rending to hear their wailings, and cries of distress, and calls for help. When morning came,

many a brave soldier was frozen to the ground. When Paul saw the terrible suffering, he felt that he was willing to make any sacrifice to put a stop to such horrors. But then he remembered that Justice, Truth, and Righteousness are more valuable than human life, and that it is better to fight for them than to yield to injustice and wickedness.

But now the hearts of the soldiers were cheered with the news that the gunboats were coming. Paul looked down the river and saw a cloud of black smoke hanging over the forest, rising from their tall chimneys. Steamboats loaded with provisions came with the fleet. The soldiers swung their caps, and made the air ring with their lusty cheers.

What a magnificent sight it was when the gunboats steamed up the river and opened fire upon the fort, covering themselves with clouds of smoke and flame, and all of the guns in the fort replying! The storm had died away, the air was still, and the roar of the cannonade was like thunder. All along the lines the sharpshooters' rifles were ringing. The soldiers crouched behind trees and logs and hillocks, lying on their faces, picking off the Rebel gunners when they attempted to load their cannon. But the day

passed and the fort was not taken. Saturday morning came, and the Rebels, finding themselves short of provisions, instead of waiting to be attacked, came out from the fort at daybreak, fifteen thousand strong, and made a sudden attack upon the Union army.

A great battle followed, which lasted nearly all day. Thousands were killed and wounded. Paul was obliged to ride all over the field, carrying orders to the different generals, while the bullets fell like hailstones around him. Cannon-balls flew past him, shells exploded over his head, men fell near him, but he was unharmed. He saw with grief his comrades overpowered and driven, and could hardly keep back the tears when he saw the Rebels capture some of Captain Schwartz's guns. But when the infantry gave way and fled panic-stricken along the road towards Fort Henry, throwing away their muskets, his indignation was aroused.

"Stop! or I 'll shoot you," he said, drawing his revolver.

"A'n't you ashamed of yourselves, you cowards?" shouted one brave soldier.

Paul looked round to see who it was, and discovered his friend the sharpshooter, who thus aided him

in rallying the fugitives. Blood was dripping from his fingers. A ball had passed through one arm, but he had tied his handkerchief over the wound, and was on his way back to the lines to take part once more in the battle. Paul thanked the noble fellow for helping him, and then, with the aid of other officers, they rallied the fugitives till reinforcements came.

Onward came the Rebels, flushed with success, and thinking to win a glorious victory; but they were cut down with shells and canister, and by the volleys of musketry which were poured upon them. It was with great satisfaction that Paul saw the shells tear through the Rebel ranks; not that he liked to see men killed, but because he wanted Right to triumph over Wrong. Again and again the Rebels marched up the hill, but were as often swept back by the terrible fire which burst from Captain Wood's, Captain Willard's, Captain Taylor's, and Captain Dresser's batteries. The little brook which trickled through the ravine at the foot of the hill was red with the blood of the slain. It was a fearful sight But the Rebels at last gave up the attempt to drive the Union troops from the hill, and went back into

the fort Then in the afternoon there was a grand charge upon the Rebel breastworks. With a wild hurrah they carried the old flag across the ravine, and up the hill beyond, over fallen trees and through thick underbrush. Men dropped from the ranks in scores, but on — on — on they went, driving the Rebels, planting the stars and stripes on the works; and though the Rebel regiments in the fort rained solid shot and shell and grape and canister and musket-balls upon them, yet they held the ground through the long, weary, dreary winter night. When the dawn came, the dawn of Sunday, they saw a white flag flung out from the parapet of the fort, and they knew that the enemy had surrendered. What a cheer they gave! They swung their hats, sang songs, and danced for joy. How beautifully the stars and stripes waved in the morning breeze! How proudly they marched into the fort and into the town, — the drums beating, the bugles sounding, and the bands playing!

But how horrible the sight upon the field when the contest was over, — the dead, some cold and ghastly, others still warm with departing life, lying with their faces toward heaven, smiling as if only

asleep! The ground was strewn with guns, knapsacks, and blood-stained garments; the snow had changed to crimson. Many wounded were lying where they fell, some whose lives were ebbing away calmly waiting the coming of death. As Paul walked over the field he came upon one lying with clasped hands and closed eyes, whose blood was flowing from a ghastly wound in his breast. As Paul stopped to gaze a moment upon a countenance which seemed familiar, the soldier opened his eyes and smiled; then Paul saw that it was the brave sharpshooter whom he had helped on the march, who, though sick, would not go into the hospital, though wounded, would not leave the field, and had aided him in rallying the fugitives. He had fought gallantly through the battle, and received his death-wound in the last grand charge.

"I am glad you have come, for I know that one who was kind enough to help a poor fellow on the march will be willing to do one thing more," said the soldier, faintly.

"Certainly. What can I do for you?"

"Not much, only I would like to have you overhaul my knapsack for me."

Paul unstrapped the knapsack from the soldier's back, and opened it.

"There is a picture in there which I want to look at once more before I die. You will find it in my Bible."

Paul handed him the Bible.

"My mother gave me this blessed book the day I left home to join the army. It was her last gift. I promised to read it every day, and I would like to have you write to her and tell her that I have kept my promise. Tell her that I have tried to do my duty to my country and to my God. I would like to live, but am not afraid to die, and am not sorry that I enlisted. Write to my sister. She is a sweet girl, — I can see her now, — a bright-eyed, light-hearted, joyous creature. O, how she will miss me! Tell her to plant a rose-bush in the garden and call it my rose, that little Eddie, when he grows up, may remember that his eldest brother died for his country. They live away up in Wisconsin."

He took a photograph from the Bible. It was the picture of a dark-haired, black-eyed, fair-featured girl, and he gazed upon it till the tears rolled down his cheeks He drew his brawny hand across his face

and wiped them away, but the effort started the bright blood flowing in a fresher stream. "It is hard to part from her. She promised to be my wife when I came home from the war," he said, and touched it to his lips, then gazed again till his sight grew dim. He laid it with the Bible on his breast.

Paul wiped the cold sweat from the soldier's brow.

"God bless you," he whispered, and looked up and smiled. His eyes closed, and the slowly heaving heart stood still. He was gone to the land where the Faithful and True receive their just reward.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOWING WHAT HE WAS MADE OF.

THERE came a Sabbath morning, — one of the loveliest of all the year. The sun rose upon a cloudless sky, the air was laden with the fragrance of locust and alder blossoms, the oaks of the forest were changing from the gray of winter to the green of summer. Beneath their wide-spread branches were the tents of a great army; for after the capture of Fort Donelson the troops sailed up the Tennessee, and were preparing to attack the Rebels at Corinth.

Paul was lying in his tent, thinking of home, of the calmness and stillness there, broken only by the chirping of the sparrows and robins, the church-bell, the choir, and the low voices of the congregation. How different from what was passing around him, where the drummers were beating the reveille! He was startled from his waking dream by a sudden firing out among the pickets. What could it mean? It grew more furious. There was confusion. He sprang to his feet and looked out to see what was

the matter. Soldiers were running through the camp.

"What is the row?" he asked.

"The Rebels are attacking us."

It did not take him long to dress; but, while pulling on his boots, a bullet tore through the tent-cloth over his head.

The camp was astir. Officers shouted, "Fall in!" Soldiers, waking from sound sleep, buckled on their cartridge-boxes, seized their guns, and took their places in the ranks before they were fairly awake. The drummers beat the long-roll, the buglers sounded the signal for saddling horses, the artillery-men got their guns ready, cavalry-men leaped into their saddles, baggage-wagons went thundering towards the river. There was a volley of musketry, and then a deeper roar from the artillery, and the terrible contest of the day began, which became more terrific from morning till noon, from noon till night, with deafening rolls of musketry, with the roaring of a hundred cannon, with the yelling of the Rebels and the cheering of the soldiers of the Union, as the tempest surged through the forest, up and down the ravines, around Shiloh church, in the old cotton-fields,

up to the spring where the country people were accustomed to eat their Sunday dinners, down to the Tennessee River, where the gunboats were waiting for the hour when they could open with their great guns.

Paul was in the storm, riding through the leaden hail which fell all around him, pattering upon the dead leaves, cutting down the twigs of the hazel-bushes, and scarring the trees, — riding along the lines carrying messages to General Sherman, who was fighting like a tiger by the church, with the bullets piercing his clothes, — to McClernand, who was near by, — to Wallace, to Prentice, to Hurlburt, to Stuart, — riding where shells were bursting, where solid shot cut off great branches from the trees, splintered the trunks, ploughed the ground, whirled men and horses into the air, tearing them limb from limb, and then passed away with weird howlings. He breathed the thick smoke as it belched from the cannon's mouth, and felt the hot flashes on his face. He stood beside his commander, General Grant, while waiting for orders, and beheld him when tidings of disaster were brought in, — that General Prentice and hundreds of his men were captured, —

that the line was broken, and the men were falling back. He could hear the triumphant shouts of the Rebels.

Yet amid it all he saw that General Grant was cool and collected. "We will whip them yet," he said. Paul felt stronger after that, and resolved to die rather than be beaten. But how slowly dragged the hours! The sun seemed to stand still in the western sky. How hard to see the poor wounded men, thousands of them, borne to the rear, their feet crushed, their legs broken, their arms torn and mangled, and to know that there were other thousands lying upon the ground where they had fallen, and the strife still going on around them! Other thousands who were not wounded were leaving the ranks, exhausted and disheartened.

"Lieutenant Parker, you will select a line along this ravine, throw up such defences as you can, bring up those thirty-two pounders from the river, and put them in position. They can't cross this. We will beat them here," said General Grant.

Sometimes in battle minutes are of priceless value; momentous decisions must be made at once. Then men show what they are made of. Those are the

trial moments of life. Paul galloped along the ravine. He saw that it was wide and deep, and that, if the Rebels could be kept from crossing it, the battle would be won; for it was their object to reach the steamboat-landing, where General Grant had all his supplies of food. There were five great iron cannon at the landing. There, also, crouching under the river-bank, to avoid the shot and shell, were thousands of fugitives, who had become disheartened, and who had left their comrades to be overpowered and driven back. He saw the situation of affairs in an instant. His brain was clear. He made up his mind instantly what to do.

"Here, you — men!" he shouted. "Each of you shoulder one of those empty pork-barrels, and carry it up the bluff." But not a man stirred. His indignation was aroused; but he knew that it was not a time for argument. He drew his revolver, pointed it at a group, and said, "Start! or I 'll shoot you." It was spoken so resolutely that they obeyed. He told them how, if they could hold that position, the Rebels would be defeated, — how a few minutes of resolute work would save the army. He saw their courage revive. They dug a trench, cut down trees,

rolled up logs, filled the barrels with dirt, and worked like beavers. Others wheeled up the great guns, and Paul put them into position. Others brought shot and shell, and laid them in piles beside the guns. The storm was coming nearer. The lines were giving way. Regiments with broken ranks came straggling down the road.

"Bring all the batteries into position along the ravine," said General Grant. Away flew half a dozen officers with the orders, and the batteries, one after another, came thundering down the road, — the horses leaping, the artillery-men blackened and begrimed, yet ready for another fight.

"Get anybody you can to work the thirty-twos," said Colonel Webster, the chief of artillery, to Paul.

"I can sight a cannon," said a surgeon, who was dressing wounds in the hospital. He laid down his bandages, went up and patted one of the guns, as if it were an old friend, ran his eye along the sights, and told the gunners what to do.

It was sunset. All day long the battle had raged, and the Union troops had been driven. The Rebels were ready for their last grand charge, which they hoped would give them the victory. Onward

they came down the steep bank opposite, into the ravine. The Union batteries were ready for them, — Captain Silversparre with his twenty-pounders, Captain Richardson and Captain Russell with their howitzers, Captain Stone with his ten-pounders, Captain Taylor, Captain Dresser, Captain Willard, and Lieutenant Edwards, — sixty or more cannon in all. A gunner was lacking for one of the great iron thirty-twos. Paul sprang from his horse, and took command of the piece.

The long lines of the Rebels came into view. "Bang! bang! bang! bang!" went the guns. Then half a dozen crashed at once, — the great thirty-twos thundering heavier than all the others. Shells, solid shot, and canister tore through the ravine, rolling back the Rebel lines, drenching the hillsides with blood, turning the brook to crimson, and the fresh young leaves to scarlet. O the wild commotion, — the jarring of the earth, the deep reverberations rolling far away, and the shouts of the cannoneers!

"Give them canister!" shouted Paul to the cannoneers, and the terrible missiles went screaming down the ravine. The bullets were falling around

him, singing in his ears, but he heeded them not. But O how painful it was to see a brother officer torn to pieces by his side! Then how glorious to behold, through the rifts in the battle-cloud, that the Rebels were flying in confusion through the woods Then there came a cheer. General Nelson had arrived with reinforcements, and Buell's whole army was near. The thirty-two-pounders, the howitzers, and the batteries had saved the day, and the victory was won. And now, as night came on, the gunboats joined, throwing eleven-inch shells into the woods among the Rebel troops, which added discomfiture to defeat. And when the uproar, the noise, and the confusion had died away, how good to thank God for the victory, and for the preservation of his life! How gratifying to receive the thanks of his commander on the field, — to be mentioned as one who had done his duty faithfully, and who was deserving of promotion!

After the battle he was made a captain, and had greater responsibilities resting upon him. He was called upon to take long rides, with the cavalry, on expeditions into the enemy's country. Sometimes he found himself alone in the dark woods of Missis

sippi, threading the narrow paths, swimming rivers, wading creeks, plunging into swamps, — at other times, with his comrades, sweeping like a whirlwind through the Southern towns, in pursuit of the retreating foe, riding day and night, often without food, but occasionally having a nice supper of roast chicken cooked by the bivouac-fire in the forest. Sometimes he spread his blanket beneath the grand old trees, and had a rest for the night; and often, when pursued by the enemy, when there was no time to stop and rest, he slept in his saddle, and dreamed of home. So he spent the months which followed that terrible battle, obtaining information which was of inestimable value. Thus he served his country, — at Corinth, at Memphis, and at Vicksburg, where, through the long, hot, weary, sickly months, the brave soldiers toiled, building roads, cutting trenches, digging ditches, excavating canals, clearing forests, erecting batteries, working in mud and water, fighting on the Yazoo, and at last, under their great leader, sweeping down the west side of the Mississippi, crossing the river, defeating the enemy in all the battles which followed, then closing in upon the town and capturing it, after months of hardship

and suffering. How hard this work! how laborious, and wearing, and dangerous!

Paul found little time to rest. It was his duty to lay out the work for the soldiers, to say where the breastworks should be thrown up, where the guns should be placed in position. In the dark nights he went out beyond the picket-lines and examined the hills and ravines, while the bullets of the Rebel sharpshooters were flying about his ears, and in the daytime he was riding along the lines while the great guns were bellowing, to see if they were in the best position, and were doing their proper work. At length there came a morning when the Rebels raised a white flag, and Vicksburg surrendered. It was the glorious reward for all their hardship, toil, suffering, and endurance. How proudly the soldiers marched into the city, with drums beating, bands playing, and all their banners waving! It was the Fourth of July, the most joyful day of all the year. There were glad hearts all over the land, — ringing of bells and firing of cannon, songs of praise and thanksgivings; for not only at Vicksburg, but at Gettysburg, the soldiers of the Union had won a great victory.

CHAPTER XVI.

HONOR TO THE BRAVE.

PAUL'S mother lived alone, and yet she was not without company; for the bees and the humming-birds buzzing among the flowers, the old clock ticking steadily, the cat purring in the sunshine, were her constant friends through the long summer days. And every morning Azalia came in and read the news. Pleasant the sound of her approaching step! Ever welcome her appearance! Winsome her smile! How beautiful upon her cheek the deepening bloom of a guileless heart!

"Good news!" she exclaimed one morning, as she entered, with glowing countenance and sparkling eyes, tossing aside her hat.

"What is it, dear?" Mrs. Parker asked.

Azalia replied by opening a newspaper, and reading that "Captain Paul Parker, who had been acting as major, was promoted to be a colonel for meritorious and distinguished services at Vicksburg."

"I am glad he has served his country so faithfully,"

said Mrs Parker, pleased and gratified, and proud of her son.

"Who knows but that he may be a general yet?" said Azalia, triumphantly. "We are going to have a jubilee this afternoon over the victories," she added. She could stop no longer, for she was to take part in the jubilee with Daphne, and hastened away to prepare for the occasion.

All New Hope turned out to rejoice over the glorious news. Farmers came with their wagons loaded with things for the soldiers, — bottles of wine, jars of jellies and preserves, for there were thousands of wounded in the hospitals. Those who could not contribute such things were ready to give money, for their hearts were overflowing with gratitude. Old men came, leaning on their staves or supported by their children, with the fires of youth rekindling in their souls. Mothers were there, for they had sons in the service. Paul was not the only soldier who had gone from New Hope. A score had enlisted. Old folks, young folks, all the people of the place were there, in the old church.

The evening train came thundering along the railroad, stopping long enough to leave Paul, who had

unexpectedly been ordered to duty in Tennessee with General Rosecrans. He was granted a week's leave of absence. There was no one at the depot. He wondered at the silence in the streets. Houses and stores and shops were all closed. He passed up the hill to his old home; but his mother was not there, and the door was fast. The cat was lying upon the step, and purred him a welcome. The bees were humming over the flower-beds, and the swallows twittered merrily upon the roof of the house. The remembrance of his boyhood came back, and he was a child again amid the flowers.

He noticed that the people were around the church, and passed on to see what had called them together.

"Why, that is Paul Parker, as true as I am alive!" said Mr. Chrome, as he approached the church.

The little boys caught it up, and cried, "Paul has come! Paul has come!" and looked wonderingly at his blue uniform, and the eagle on his shoulders. It was buzzed through the church that he had come. Judge Adams, who was on the platform, and who was chairman of the meeting, said: "It gives me

great pleasure to announce the arrival of our esteemed fellow-citizen, Colonel Parker, who has so nobly distinguished himself in the service of our country."

"Three cheers for Colonel Parker!" shouted Mr. Chrome, and the people, glad to see him, and brimming over with joy for the victories, sprang to their feet and hurrahed and stamped till the windows rattled. Judge Adams welcomed him to the platform, and Father Surplice, Colonel Dare, and Esquire Capias rose and shook hands with him. Esquire Capias was making a speech when Paul entered; but he left off suddenly, saying: "I know that you want to hear from Colonel Parker, and it will give me greater pleasure to listen to him than to talk myself."

Then there were cries for Paul.

"It is not necessary for me to introduce Colonel Parker on this occasion," said Judge Adams. "He is our fellow-citizen; this is his home. He has honored himself and us. We have been trying to be eloquent over the great victories; but the eloquence of speech is very poor when compared with the eloquence of action." Then turning to Paul, he said: "What you and your comrades have done, Sir, will be remembered through all coming time."

"We tried to do our duty, and God gave us the victory," said Paul. He stood before them taller and stouter than when he went away. He was sunburnt; but his countenance was noble and manly, and marked with self-reliance. He never had made a speech. He did not know what to say. To stand there facing the audience, with his mother, Azalia, Daphne, and all his old friends before him, was very embarrassing. It was worse than meeting the Rebels in battle. But why should he be afraid? They were all his friends, and would respect him if he did the best he could. He would not try to be eloquent. He would simply tell them the story of the battles; how the soldiers had marched, and toiled, and fought, — not for glory, honor, or fame, but because they were true patriots; how he had seen them resign themselves to death as calmly as to a night's repose, thinking and talking of friends far away, of father, mother, brothers and sisters, their pleasant homes, and the dear old scenes, yet never uttering a regret that they had enlisted to save their country.

There were moist eyes when he said that; but when he told them of the charge at Fort Donelson, — how the troops marched through the snow in

long, unbroken lines, and with a hurrah went up the hill, over fallen trees, and drove the Rebels from their breastworks, — the men swung their hats, and shouted, and the women waved their handkerchiefs, and cheered as if crazy with enthusiasm.

Then Azalia and Daphne sung the Star-spangled Banner, the congregation joining in the chorus. Under the excitement of the moment, Judge Adams called for contributions for the soldiers, and the old farmers took out their pocket-books. Those who had made up their minds to give five dollars gave ten, while Mr. Middlekauf, Hans's father, who thought he would give twenty-five, put fifty into the hat.

When the meeting was over, Paul stepped down from the platform, threw his arms around his mother's neck and kissed her, and heard her whisper, "God bless you, Paul." Then the people came to shake hands with him. Even Miss Dobb came up, all smiles, shaking her curls, holding out her bony hand, and saying, "I am glad to see you, Colonel Parker. You know that I was your old teacher. I really feel proud to know that you have acquitted yourself so well. I shall claim part of the honor. You must come and take tea with me, and tell me all about the battles," she said.

"My leave of absence is short. I shall not have time to make many visits; but it will give me great pleasure to call upon those who have *always* been my friends," said Paul, with a look so searching that it brought the blood into her faded cheeks.

Hearty the welcome from Azalia and Daphne, and from those who had been his scholars, who listened with eager interest to the words which fell from his lips. Golden the days and blissful those few hours spent with his mother, sitting by her side in the old kitchen; with Daphne and Azalia, singing the old songs; with Azalia alone, stealing down the shaded walk in the calm moonlight, talking of the changeful past, and looking into the dreamy future, the whip-poorwills and plovers piping to them from the clover-fields, the crickets chirping them a cheerful welcome, and the river saluting them with its ceaseless serenade!

CHAPTER XVII.

CHICKAMAUGA.

QUICK the changes. Paul was once more with the army, amid the mountains of Tennessee, marching upon Chattanooga with General Rosecrans, tramping over Lookout Mountain, and along the Chickamauga.

Then came a day of disaster in September. A great battle began on Saturday morning, lasted through Sunday, and closed on Monday. Paul rode courageously where duty called him, through the dark woods, along the winding river, where the bullets sang, where the shells burst, where hundreds of brave men fell. Terrible the contest. It was like a thunder-storm among the mountains, — like the growling of the angry surf upon the shore of the ocean. How trying, after hours of hard fighting, to see the lines waver and behold the Rebels move victoriously over the field! with disaster setting in, and to know that all that is worth living for is trembling in the scale!

There are such moments in battle. General Rosecrans's army was outnumbered. Paul saw the Rebels driving in the centre and turning the left flank to cut off all retreat to Chattanooga. The moment for great, heroic action had come. He felt the blood leap through his veins as it never had leaped before. The Rebel line was advancing up the hill. The Union batteries were making ready to leave.

"Stay where you are!" he shouted. "Give them canister! Double shot the guns! Quick! One minute now is worth a thousand hours."

"Rally! rally! Don't let them have the guns!" he shouted to the flying troops. They were magic words. Men who had started to run came back. Those who were about to leave stood in their places, ready to die where they were. Five minutes passed; they seemed ages. On — nearer — up to the muzzles of the guns came the Rebels; then, losing heart, fled down the hill, where hundreds of their comrades lay dying and dead. Their efforts to break the line had failed. But once more they advanced in stronger force, rushing up the hill. Fearful the din and strife, the shouts and yells, the clashing of

sabres and bayonets, the roar of the cannon, the explosion of shells. Paul found himself suddenly falling, then all was dark.

When he came to himself the scene had changed. He was lying upon the ground. A soldier, wearing a dirty gray jacket, and with long hair, was pulling off his boots, saying, "This Yankee has got a pair of boots worth having."

"Hold on! what are you up to?" said Paul.

"Hullo! blue bellie, ye are alive, are ye? Tho't yer was dead. Reckon I 'll take yer boots, and yer coat tew."

Paul saw how it was: he was wounded, and left on the field. He was in the hands of the Rebels; but hardest to bear was the thought that the army had been defeated. He was stiff and sore. The blood was oozing from a wound in his side. He was burning up with fever. He asked the Rebels who were around him for a drink of water; but, instead of moistening his parched lips, one pointed his gun at him and threatened to blow out his brains. They stripped off his coat and picked his pockets. Around him were hundreds of dead men. The day wore away and the night came on. He opened his

lips to drink the falling dew, and lay with his face towards the stars. He thought of his mother, of home, of Azalia, of the angels and God. Many times he had thought how sad it must be to die alone upon the battle-field, far from friends; but now he remembered the words of Jesus Christ: "I will not leave you comfortless. My peace I give unto you." Heaven seemed near, and he felt that the angels were not far away. He had tried to do his duty. He believed that, whether living or dying, God would take care of him, and of his mother. In his soul there was sweet peace and composure; but what was the meaning of the strange feeling creeping over him, the numbness of his hands, the fluttering of his heart? Was it not the coming on of death? He remembered the prayer of his childhood, lisped many a time while kneeling by his mother's side, and repeated it once more.

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

The stars were fading. His senses reeled. His eyelids closed, and he lay pale, cold, and motionless, among the dead.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW HE LIVED IN THE MEMORY OF HIS FRIENDS.

"COLONEL PARKER, mortally wounded and left on the field." So read the account of the battle in the newspapers, — which told of the disaster to the army, — how the lines were broken, how the cannon were lost, how Paul was shot through the breast, how, had it not been for General Thomas, it would have been a day of utter ruin. Father Surplice went up to the little old house to break the sad tidings to Paul's mother, for he could best give comfort and consolation in time of affliction.

"I have sad news," he said. She saw it in his face, even before he spoke, and knew that something terrible had happened. "A great battle has been fought, and God has seen fit that your son should die for his country."

She made no outcry, but the tears glistened in her eyes. She wiped them away, and calmly replied: "I gave him freely to the country and to God. I know that he was a dutiful, affectionate son.

I am not sorry that I let him go." Then with clasped hands she looked upward, through her blinding tears, and thanked God that Paul had been faithful, honest, true, and good.

The neighbors came in to comfort her, but were surprised to find her so calm, and to hear her say, "It is well."

It was a gloomy day in New Hope, — in the stores and shops, and in the school-house, for the children affectionately remembered their old teacher. When the sexton tolled the bell, they bowed their heads and wept bitter tears. Mr. Chrome laid down his paint-brush and sat with folded hands, saying, "I can't work." Colonel Dare dashed a tear from his eye, and said, "So slavery takes our noblest and best." He walked down to the little old house and said to Mrs. Parker, "You never shall want while I have a cent left." Judge Adams came, and with much emotion asked, "What can I do for you?"

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters," she replied. so calmly that the Judge felt that she was the strong one and he the weak.

When Azalia heard the news the rose-bloom faded from her cheeks and her heart stood still. In imagination she saw Paul lying on the ground, with blood flowing from his side, enduring dreadful agony, while waiting the coming of death. She could hardly think of him as gone, never to return, yet the church-bell was tolling mournfully, gone, gone, gone! She clasped her hands upon her heart to keep it from bursting.

"Be comforted, my child. He has gone to a better world than this," said her mother, sympathizing in her sorrow.

Daphne came in, and bathed Azalia's burning brow, kissed her tenderly, and said, "Don't cry, dear."

Azalia was not weeping, — there were no tears in her eyes. God had not wiped them all away, but the great and sudden affliction was like the heat of a fiery furnace. It had dried the fountains. Though her mother and Daphne were so kind and tender, they could not take away her heart-ache. It was a weary day. She sat by the window and gazed upon the wheat-fields, brown and bare, for it was almost October, and the reapers had gathered the

grain. Beyond the fields was the river, shrunk to a narrow bed by the heats of summer. Dead leaves were floating down the stream. Like the *Miserere* which the choir chanted at the funeral of a sweet young girl before Paul went to the army, was the murmuring of the water. Beyond the river were green meadows and gardens and orchards, where dahlias were blooming, and grapes and apples ripening in the mellow sunshine. She thought of Paul as having passed over the river, and as walking in the vineyard of the Lord. The summer flowers which she had planted in her own garden were faded, the stalks were dry, and the leaves withered. They never would bloom again. Like them, the brightness of her life had passed away.

Night brought no relief. It seemed as if her heart would break, but she remembered what Jesus said: "Come unto me and I will give you rest." She told Him all her grief, asked Him to help her, inasmuch as He was able to bear the sorrows of all the world. So confiding in Him, she experienced indescribable peace of mind.

Then in the evening they who walked along the street stopped and listened by the gate to hear the

music which floated out through the open window, bowing their heads, and in silence wiping away their tears. It was the music of the "Messiah," which Handel composed. She sung it in church one Sunday before Paul went to the army, and Father Surplice said it set him to thinking about the music of heaven; but now to the passers in the street it was as if Jesus called them, so sweet and tender was the song.

It was consoling to take from her bureau the letters which Paul had written, and read again what she had read many times, — to look upon the laurel-leaf which he plucked in the woods at Donelson, the locust-blossoms which he gathered at Shiloh, the moss-rose which grew in a garden at Vicksburg, — to read his noble and manly words of his determination to do his duty in all things.

"Life is worth nothing," read one of the letters, "unless devoted to noble ends. I thank God that I live in this age, for there never has been so great an opportunity to do good. The heroes of all ages, those who have toiled and suffered to make the world better, are looking down from the past to see if I am worthy to be of their number. I can see the millions

yet to come beckoning me to do my duty for their sake. They will judge me. What answer can I give them if I falter?"

Thus in her sorrow Azalia found some comfort in looking at the faded flowers, and in reflecting that he had not faltered in the hour of trial, but had proved himself worthy to be numbered with the heroic dead.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHAT BECAME OF A TRAITOR.

BUT Paul was not dead. He was in the hands of the enemy. He had been taken up from the battle-field while unconscious, put into an ambulance, and carried with other wounded to a Rebel hospital.

"We can't do anything for this Yankee," said one of the surgeons who looked at his wound.

"No, he will pop off right soon, I reckon," said another; and Paul was left to live or die, as it might be.

When he awoke from his stupor he found himself in an old barn, lying on a pile of straw. He was weak and faint, and suffered excruciating pain. The Rebel soldier had stolen his coat, and he had no blanket to protect him from the cold night-winds. He was helpless. His flesh was hot, his lips were parched. A fever set in, his flesh wasted away, and his eyes became wild, glassy, and sunken. Week after week he lay powerless to help himself, often

out of his head and talking of home, or imagining he was in battle. How long the days! how lonesome the nights! But he had a strong constitution, and instead of "popping off," as the surgeon predicted, began to get well. Months passed, of pain and agony and weary longing. It was sweet relief when he was able to creep out and sit in the warm sunshine.

One day a Rebel lieutenant, wearing a gay uniform trimmed with gold lace, came past him. Paul saw that he had been drinking liquor, for he could not walk straight.

"Why don't you salute me, you Yankee villain?" said the fellow, stopping.

Paul was startled at the voice, looked the lieutenant in the face, and saw that it was Philip Funk. His face was bloated, and his eyes bloodshot. When he fled from New Hope after robbing Mr. Bond, he made his way south, joined the Rebels, and was now a lieutenant. Paul was so changed by sickness that Philip did not recognize him.

"Why don't you salute me, you dirty Yankee puppy?" said Philip, with an oath.

"I don't salute a traitor and a robber," said Paul.

Philip turned pale with anger. "Say that again, and I will cut your heart out!" he said, with a horrible oath, raising his sword and advancing upon Paul, who stood still and looked him calmly in the eye.

"Cowards only attack unarmed men," said Paul.

"What do you mean, sir, by calling me a robber, traitor, and coward?" Philip asked, white with rage, not recognizing Paul.

"I mean that you, Philip Funk, committed robbery at New Hope, ran away from home, became a traitor, and now you show yourself to be a coward by threatening to cut out the heart of a weak defenceless prisoner."

"Who are you?" stammered Philip.

"My name is Paul Parker. I am a colonel in the service of the United States," Paul replied, not recognizing by any familiar act his old playmate and school-fellow.

Philip dropped his sword, and stood irresolute and undecided what to do. A group of Rebel officers who had been wounded, and were strolling about the grounds, saw and heard it all. One was a colonel.

"What do you know about Lieutenant Funk?" he asked.

"He was my schoolmate. He committed robbery and came south to join your army," Paul replied.

The Colonel turned to the officers who were with him, and said, "This is the fellow who is suspected of stealing from the soldiers, and it is said that he skulked at Chickamauga."

"The cuss ought to be reduced to the ranks," said another.

Philip did not stop to hear any more, but walked rapidly away.

The next day he was arrested and brought before a court-martial, tried, and found guilty of hiding behind a stump when ordered to make a charge in battle, and of stealing money from the soldiers. The court ordered that he be stripped of his uniform and reduced to the ranks, and wear the "rogue's coat" through the camp. The coat was a flour-barrel, without heads, but with holes cut in the sides for his arms.

Philip was brought out upon the parade-ground, deprived of his sword and uniform, and compelled to put on the barrel, on which were written the words,

COWARD, ROBBER.

Thus, with two soldiers to guard him, with a drummer and fifer playing the Rogues' March, he was paraded through the camp. The soldiers hooted at him, and asked him all sorts of questions.

"How are you, Bummer?" asked one.

"Did you pay your tailors with the money you stole?" asked another.

"Your coat puckers under the arms and wrinkles in the back," said another.

"He felt so big they had to hoop him to keep him from bursting," remarked one, who remembered how pompous Philip had been.

After being marched through the camp, he was set to work with a shovel, cleaning up the grounds. It was a sorry day to Philip. He wished he had never been born. He was despised alike by officers and soldiers. The officers made him do their dirty work, while the soldiers, knowing that he had not courage enough to resent an insult, made him the general scavenger of the camp. This treatment was so hard to bear that Philip thought of deserting; but he knew that if he was caught he would be shot, and did not dare to make the attempt. The slaves in the camp looked down upon him, and spoke of him

as the "meanest sort of Yankee white trash." The soldiers turned him out of their tents. "We won't have a Yankee thief and coward in our mess," said they, and he was obliged to sleep under the trees, or wherever he could find shelter. He became dirty and ragged. His clothes dropped from him piece by piece, till he had nothing left but rags. He had little to eat. He had no friends. When he was sick, no one cared for him. Those were bitter days; but instead of being made better at heart by his punishment, he cursed and swore, and wished only that he could get whiskey to drink.

Winter set in. There came a cold, stormy night. Philip wandered about the camp to keep himself warm. He was weak and faint, and at last, tired, exhausted, and his teeth chattering with ague, crawled into a wagon, drew his old tattered blanket over his head, and after shivering awhile went to sleep. The teamsters found him there in the morning, stiff and cold. He had died during the night, with no friend near him, a vagabond, an outcast, despised by everybody.

The officer who had charge of the camp, when he heard that Philip was dead, called up a couple of

soldiers who were in the guard-house for getting drunk, and said to them, "You were drunk yesterday, and for a punishment I sentence you to bury the camp-scullion who froze to death last night."

The teamster harnessed his horses, drove outside of the camp into a field, where the two soldiers dug a shallow grave, tumbled the body into it, threw back the earth, trampled it down with their feet, shouldered their shovels, and went back to camp as unconcerned as if they had buried a dog.

CHAPTER XX.

DARK DAYS.

WHEN Paul's wound had healed sufficiently to enable him to travel, he was put into a freight car with his comrades and sent to the Rebel prison at Andersonville. The ride was long and hard, but the prisoners bore the jolting without a murmur, for they supposed they would soon be exchanged and sent North. They were doomed to bitter disappointment.

The prison was a yard enclosed by a high fence. There was a platform on the outside where the sentinels stood on guard, and ready to shoot any one who approached nearer than what they called "the dead line." The prisoners had no shelter from the scorching rays of the sun through the long summer days, nor from the sleety rains and freezing nights of winter. They dug holes in the ground with their hands, and made the cold, damp earth their bed. A slimy brook ran through the grounds, foul with filth from the camps of the Rebels. There was a

marsh in the centre of the yard, full of rottenness, where the water stood in green and stagnant pools, breeding flies, mosquitos, and vermin, where all the ooze and scum and slops of the camp came to the surface, and filled the air with horrible smells. They had very little food, — nothing but a half-pint of coarse corn-meal, a little molasses, and a mouthful of tainted bacon and salt, during each twenty-four hours. They were herded like sheep. The yard was packed with them. There were more than twenty thousand in a place designed for half that number.

When Paul and his comrades reached the prison, they were examined by the officer in command, a brutal fellow named Wirz, who robbed them of what money they had. The gate opened, and they passed in. When Paul beheld the scene, his heart sank within him. He had suffered many hardships, but this was an experience beyond everything else. He was still weak. He needed nourishing food, but he must eat the corn-meal or starve. Everywhere he saw only sickening sights, — pale, woe-begone wretches, clothed in filthy rags, covered with vermin. Some were picking up crumbs of bread which had been swept out from the bakery. Others were suck-

ing the bones which had been thrown out from the cook-house. Some sat gazing into vacancy, taking no notice of what was going on around them, — dreaming of homes which they never were again to behold. Many were stretched upon the ground, too weak to sit up, from whose hearts hope had died out, and who were waiting calmly for death to come and relieve them from their sufferings. Thousands had died. One hundred died on the day Paul entered, and another hundred during the night. All day long the bodies lay among the living in the sun. When the dead-cart came in, they were thrown into it like logs of wood. It was a horrible sight, — the stony eyes, the sunken cheeks, the matted hair, the ghastly countenances, the swaying limbs, as the cart jolted along the uneven ground! More than thirteen thousand soldiers starved and murdered by the Rebels were thus carried out in the dead-carts.

The keepers of the prison were cruel. Paul saw a poor cripple crawl towards the fence and reach his hand over the dead line to get a bone. Crack went the rifle of the sentinel, which sent a bullet through the prisoner's brain, who tossed up his hands, gave one heart-rending outcry, and rolled over —

dead. On a dark and stormy night some of the prisoners escaped, but ferocious dogs were put upon their track, and they were recaptured. The hounds mangled them, and the Rebel officers had them tied up and whipped, till death put an end to their sufferings.

It was terrible to hear the coughing of those who were dying of consumption, — to see them crawling from place to place, searching in vain to find a shelter from the driving storms, — to hear the piteous cries of those who were racked with pains, or the moans of those who gave themselves up to despair. For want of proper food the prisoners suffered from scurvy; — their gums rotted, their teeth fell out, and their flesh turned to corruption; they wasted away, and died in horrible agony. It was so terrible to hear their dying cries, that Paul put his fingers in his ears; but soon he became accustomed to the sights and sounds, and looked upon the scenes with indifference. He pitied the sufferers, but was powerless to aid them. Soon he found that his own spirits began to droop. He roused himself, determined to brave out all the horrors of the place. He sang songs and told stories, and got up games to keep

his fellow-prisoners in good heart. But notwithstanding all his efforts to maintain his cheerfulness and composure, he felt that he was growing weaker. Instead of being robust, he became thin and spare. His cheeks were hollow and his eyes sunken. There was a fever in his bones. Day by day he found himself taking shorter walks. At night, when he curled down in his burrow, he felt tired, although he had done no work through the day. In the morning he was stiff, and sore, and lame, and although the ground was cold and damp, it was easier to lie there than to get up. His hair became matted, — his fingers were long and bony. Each day his clothes became more ragged. When he first entered the prison, he tried to keep himself clean and free from vermin, but in vain. One day he went out to wash his tattered clothes, but the stream was so dirty he sat down and waited for it to become clear. He sat hour after hour, but it was always the same slimy, sickening stream.

The Rebels took delight in deluding the prisoners with false hopes, — telling them that they were soon to be exchanged and sent home; but instead of release, the dead-cart went its daily rounds, bearing

its ghastly burden. That was their exchange, and they looked upon the shallow trenches as the only home which they would ever reach. Hope died out and despair set in. Some prisoners lost their reason, and became raving maniacs, while others became only gibbering idiots. Some who still retained their reason, who all their lives had believed that the Almighty is a God of justice and truth, began to doubt if there be a God. Although they had cried and begged for deliverance, there was no answer to their prayers. Paul felt that his own faith was wavering; but he could not let go of the instructions he had received from his mother. In the darkest hour, when he was most sorely tempted to break out into cursing, he was comforted and reassured by Uncle Peter, an old gray-headed negro, who had been a slave all his life. Peter had been whipped, kicked, and cuffed many times by his hard-hearted, wicked master, not because he was unfaithful, but because he loved to pray, and shout, and sing. Through the long night, sitting by his pitch-knot fire in his cabin, Uncle Peter had sung the songs which lifted him in spirit almost up to heaven, whither his wife and children had gone, after cruel whippings and scourgings by their

master. It was so sweet to think of her as having passed over the river of Jordan into the blessed land, that he could not refrain from shouting:

"O my Mary is sitting on the tree of life,
To see the Jordan roll;
O, roll Jordan, roll Jordan, roll Jordan, roll!
I will march the angel march, —
I will march the angel march.
O my soul is rising heavenward,
To see where the Jordan rolls."

He had given food and shelter to some of the prisoners who escaped from the horrible place, and had piloted them through the woods, and for this was arrested and thrown into the prison.

Uncle Peter took a great liking to Paul, and, when Paul was down-hearted, cheered him by saying: "Never you give up. Don't let go of de hand of de good Lord. It is mighty hard to bear such treatment, but we colored people have borne it all our lives. But 'pears like my heart would break when I think of my children sold down Souf." Uncle Peter wiped his eyes with his tattered coat-sleeve, and added: "But de Lord is coming to judge de earth with righteousness, and den I reckon de Rebs will catch it."

Uncle Peter dug roots and cooked Paul's food for him, for the Rebels would not allow them any wood, although there was a forest near the prison. Paul could not keep back the tears when he saw how kind Uncle Peter was. He thought that he never should weep again, for he felt that the fountains of his heart were drying up. Uncle Peter sat by him through the long days, fanning him with his old tattered straw hat, brushing the flies from his face, moistening his lips with water, and bathing his brow. He was as black as charcoal, and had a great nose and thick lips, — but notwithstanding all that Paul loved him.

Thus the days and weeks and months went by, Uncle Peter keeping the breath of life in Paul's body, while thousands of his comrades died. There was no change in prison affairs for the better. There was no hope of release, no prospect of deliverance, — no words from home, no cheering news, no intelligence, except from other prisoners captured from time to time, and sent to the horrible slaughter-pen to become maniacs and idiots, — to be murdered, — to die of starvation and rottenness, — to be borne out in the dead-cart to the trenches.

Though Paul sometimes was sorely tempted to

yield to despondency, there were hours when, with clear vision, he looked beyond the horrors of the prison to the time when God would balance the scales of justice, and permit judgment to be executed, not only upon the fiend Wirz, who had charge of the prison, but also upon Jeff Davis and the leaders of the rebellion. And though his sufferings were terrible to bear, there was not a moment when he was sorry that he had enlisted to save his country. So through all the gloom and darkness his patriotism and devotion shone like a star which never sets.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONSECRATION.

AS the weeks passed by, bringing no intelligence to New Hope that Paul was living, — when there was no longer a doubt of his death, — Father Surplice held a memorial service. It was on Sunday, and all the people were at church. Appropriate for the occasion were the words which he read from the New Testament of the widow of Nain, — how, "as Jesus came nigh to the city, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said, 'Weep not!'"

Consoling and comforting were his own words, which sank deep into the hearts of the stricken people; and though the good man said, "Weep not!" tears dropped from his own eyes, and fell upon the great Bible which lay open before him. It was a sad and solemn service. Though the heart of the mother was yearning for her son, yet she could say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Mrs. Parker still lived in the little old cottage. The neighbors were very kind, and she wanted for nothing, for Colonel Dare remembered his promise. Peaceful was her life. The birds sang cheerful songs; sweet was the humming of the bees, fragrant the flowers in the garden, and steady the flowing of the river; and as she listened to the waterfall, she thought of Paul as standing by the River of Life. How, then, could she mourn for him? Yet she missed him. Sometimes she listened as if to hear his footsteps coming up the garden walk. Sometimes her eyes filled with tears, as her heart went out to the lonely battle-field where she thought him lying. O, if she could but behold him again, — clasp him in her arms, — and once more lay her hand upon his brow, and bless him with a mother's tenderest love!

But he was gone, and for him she could work no more. His comrades were bearing on the flag, upholding it on bloody fields, fighting as he fought, suffering as he suffered, needing help and comfort and cheer from those at home. There was work to be done for them; so through the days she sat in the old kitchen, knitting and sewing for the soldiers, wishing that she had half a dozen hands instead of two, that she might help them more.

There was one who came to aid her every day, — Azalia, who, in the silence and seclusion of her chamber, had looked out upon the yellow harvest-fields where the farmers were gathering the first ripe ears of seed-corn, and had tried to still the wild commotion in her heart by remembering that it was just and right for the Lord of the harvest to gather his "choicest grains." Down on the lowlands by the river the nurserymen were selecting their fairest trees, and transplanting them in their orchards on the pleasant hills beyond the stream. Why, then, should she complain if the kind Father had seen fit to do the same?

It was consoling to take from her bureau drawer, where her keepsakes were stored, the letters which Paul had written, undo the black ribbon which she had tied around the package, and read again and again that which she almost knew by heart. What manly words were there: "Life is worth nothing unless devoted to noble ends. I can see the millions yet to come beckoning me to do my duty for their sake. What answer can I give them if I falter?"

So read one of the letters. They were words

which she could not forget. They were written from the trenches before Vicksburg, when the prospects of the country were dark and gloomy, — when craven men at home were crying, "Peace! Peace! Let us have peace at any price!" forgetting that there can be no reconcilement between right and wrong. Paul had sacrificed everything — life itself — for the sake of those who were to come after him, — for Truth and Justice. She thought of him as asleep beneath the sod of the battle-field where he fell, — of all that was mortal lying there, but of his soul as having passed up into heaven, perhaps even then beholding her from the celestial sphere. "What answer can I give to those who come after me?" The question haunted her through the waning days and the lonely nights. What could she do? How listless her life! of how little account! How feeble, forceless, and narrow all her efforts! What sacrifices had she made? None. She had lived for herself alone. Was this all of life? In the silent hours, when all around were hushed in slumber, her longing soul, with far-reaching sight, looked out upon the coming years, and beheld the opening prospect, — a country saved, a nation redeemed, justice and

truth triumphant, and Peace, with her white wings, brooding over the land! This through sacrifice of blood, of strength, of ease and comfort. To withhold the sacrifice was to lose all. To her the coming millions were beckoning as they had beckoned to him. With prayers of consecration she gave herself to the country, — to go wherever duty called, to labor, to endure hardship, and brave scenes which would wring out her heart's blood, — to face disease and death itself, if need be, to hand down a priceless inheritance to the coming ages.

"You will get sick, my child. You have not strength to be a nurse in the hospital," said her mother, when Azalia told her that she must go and take care of the soldiers.

"I cannot spare you, my daughter," said her father, tenderly taking her in his arms, and kissing her ruby lips. She was his only child, and he loved her dearly. "I don't think it is your duty to go; and how lonesome the house would be without my darling!"

And so, knowing that it was her duty to do whatever her parents wished, she tried to be content. But the days dragged wearily. She was ever think-

ing of the soldiers, — thinking through the days and through the nights, till the bright bloom faded from her cheek. Her heart was far away. Her life was incomplete, — she felt that it was running to waste.

Her father saw that his flower was fading. At last he said, "Go, my darling, and God be with you."

"I don't think that Judge Adams ought to let Azalia go into the hospital. It is n't a fit place for girls," said Miss Dobb, when she heard that Azalia was to be a nurse. But, giving no heed to Miss Dobb, with the blessing of her parents following her, she left her pleasant home, gave up all its ease and comfort, to minister to the sick and wounded, who had fought to save the country.

She went to Washington, and thence to the hospitals at Annapolis. It was hard work to stand all day by the side of the sick, bathing their fevered brows, moistening their parched lips, binding up their bleeding wounds. It was painful to look upon the quivering flesh, torn and mangled by cannon-shot. But she learned to bear it all, — to stand calmly by, waiting upon the surgeon while he ran his sharp knife into the live flesh. It was a pleasure to aid him in his work.

Her step was light upon the floor; soothing and tender the touch of her hand. There was no light so sweet and pure as that which beamed from her earnest eyes. The sick waited impatiently for her appearance in the morning, watched her footsteps through the day, thanked her for all she did, and said, "God bless you!" when she bade them good night. Men who were in the habit of uttering fearful oaths wept when she talked with them about their mothers; she wrote their letters, and read to them the words of affection which came from home. She sang the songs they loved to hear. It was like wine to the weak. The down-hearted took new courage, and those who were well enough to be hobbling about on crutches, who were telling stories of the battles, forgot what they were saying while listening to her voice. Her presence was noonday, her absence night. Once, when through long watching and patient waiting her strength gave way, and the fever raged in her own veins, it was touching to see their sorrow. The loud-talking spoke in whispers, and walked noiselessly along the wards, for fear of increasing the pain which racked her aching head; the sick ones, who missed the touch of her magic

hand, and the sweet music of her voice, and the sunlight of her presence, whose fevers were raging because she was absent, when the physician went his rounds in the morning, at noon, and at night, inquired not about themselves, but her. When the fever passed, — when she was well enough to walk through the wards, and hold for a moment the hands which were stretched out on every side, — it was as if her very presence had power to heal.

How blessed her work! — to give life and strength; to soothe pain, change sorrow to joy; to sit beside the dying, and talk of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; to wipe the dampness of death from their brows, listen to their last words, and, when the spirit had flown, to close the sightless eyes, and cut from the pale brow a lock of hair for a fond mother far away, thinking ever of her dying boy.

So the months went by, — autumn to winter, winter to spring, and spring to summer.

CHAPTER XXII.

UNDER THE OLD FLAG.

THERE was no change at Andersonville, but in the loathsome prison it was ever the same terrible scene of starvation, corruption, disease, despair, and death. Every morning those who had died during the night were collected by the prisoners and laid in rows by the prison gate, where, during the day, they were piled upon the dead-cart and borne out to the trenches. There was no hope of relief for the living, and each prisoner looked forward with indifference to his inevitable fate. Above them floated the Rebel flag. They were kept there beneath its folds by Jefferson Davis and General Lee, till thirteen thousand had been starved and murdered.

Paul knew that, notwithstanding Uncle Peter's constant care and nursing, he was growing weaker; but he had learned to look death calmly in the face, and so was undisturbed by the prospect. He knew that God, who takes care of the sparrows,

would not forget his mother, and he felt that Azalia would sometimes shed a tear when she thought of him.

But one morning there was an unusual stir among the prisoners. "You are to be exchanged and sent home," said the Rebel officers. They had been told the same thing so many times, and had been always so cruelly deceived, that they did not believe the statement till orders were issued for a portion of them to be ready to march to the cars at an appointed hour. Paul was among those who were ordered away. All were ready in an instant, for they had no baggage to pack up, no knapsacks, no equipments, no overcoats, — nothing but the rags upon their bodies.

Those who were so weak that they could scarcely creep from place to place rose and stood upon their feet when told that they were to go home. Paul felt a fresh wave of life sweep over him, thrilling every fibre of his wasted frame. Hope revived. Home! O the blissful thought! He rose weak and trembling from his bed on the cold, damp ground, wrapped his rags about him, and, leaning on a cane, supported by Uncle Peter, hobbled out and took his

place in the long line of skeletons, and waited with eager eyes to see the gate turn upon its rusty hinges.

It was hard to part with Uncle Peter, who had been so kind to him. "God bless you and reward you for all your kindness to me," said Paul, bidding him good by, and shaking hands for the last time.

"I 'se sorry to part with ye, Kurnel, but I bless de Lord you is gwine. We 'll meet again one of dese days, whar de Rebs won't trouble us, and whar we will be free foreber," said the old negro, looking up into heaven. He could not go. He was a slave. There was no freedom for him till the rebellion was crushed, or till the grave opened.

The gates turned on their hinges, and the regiment of skeletons in rags took up its march. Such a procession never before was seen on earth. A thousand emaciated forms, tottering, reeling, hobbling on canes and crutches, wending their way to the cars, — not to luxurious cushioned seats, but to hard, jolting cattle-cars, — for a long ride of hundreds of miles before reaching the sea-coast. But hope inspired them. They were breathing fresh air, and were gazing on smiling fields, waving with grain. They were on their way home. The birds cheered

them, singing of home. "Going home, going home!" said the car-wheels, as they passed from rail to rail. In joy and gladness they sang:

> "I 'm going home, I 'm going home,
> To die no more, to die no more."

It was as if they had left behind them forever all sorrow and suffering, and that for them there could be no more distress, or pain, or anguish. It was a long, weary, dusty ride. Some died on the way, but hope kept most of them alive.

They reached the city of Charleston, passed from the cars to a steamboat, which was to take them down the harbor to the place of exchange. The waters danced joyfully around them, as if greeting them with gladness. The breezes came in from the dark blue ocean and fanned their wasted cheeks. The waves, like a loving mother, gently rocked them and sung a soothing lullaby. But O what joy to behold once more the dear old flag! How serenely and lovingly it floated in the breeze! They saluted it with cheers, — shed tears of gratitude, — clasped each other by the hand, — rushed into each other's arms. Those who were able to stand danced

in a delirium of joy! Paul was too weak to sit up. He could only lie upon the deck, and gaze upon the flag till his eyes filled with tears, and say: "Thank God, I have seen it once more!" Beneath that flag there was joy, peace, comfort, food, clothing, and freedom. Hospital nurses were there with blankets, and great kettles filled with soup and coffee. For the wounded there were bandages; for the sick there were cordials, wines, and medicines. There were tender-hearted men, ready to relieve all their sufferings. It was like passing from the prison of despair into a paradise of peace and rest, and in joy and gladness they began to sing,

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

The strong men on board of the ship, the nurses, and the stout-hearted sailors wept like children, and spoke hard words against the Rebels when they looked upon the haggard countenances, the hollow cheeks, the sunken eyes, of the skeleton forms around them.

Although Paul was so weak that he could hardly lift his hands to his head, although his comrades were passing away, although every day he saw their

bodies, wrapped in hammocks and weighted with shot, cast into the sea, yet he never experienced such bliss, such contentment, as while lying on the deck through the long summer day, looking up to the old flag, and the clear sky, and out upon the calm and peaceful sea, thinking of the sea of glass and the great white throne, and the calmness, sereneness, and rest of heaven. And at night, when lulled to sleep by the rippling waves, how enchanting his dreams of home, of his mother, of the scenes of other days, — the old house, the swallows twittering around its eaves, the roses blooming beneath the window, the night-wind sweeping down the valley, the church-bell ringing the evening hour, its deep tolling when the funeral train passed on to the cemetery in the shady grove, — his friends welcoming him home once more, Azalia among them, queen of the hour, peerless in beauty, with rose bloom on her cheek, — of Mr. Chrome, Judge Adams, and Colonel Dare, all saying, "We are glad to see you," — dreaming, and waking, to find it only a dream.

But the ship was bearing him on. The distance was lessening. One more day, and the voyage would be at an end, the ship in port. O, if he could but

see his mother once more, — feel her hand upon his brow, her kiss upon his lip, — then he could die content! A desire for life set in. Hope revived. He would fight death as he had fought the Rebels, and, God willing, he would win the victory.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE JAWS OF DEATH.

THE hospital steamer, with its freight of living skeletons, had accomplished its voyage in safety, and lay moored at the wharf in Annapolis. Nurses and sailors were carrying the emaciated forms from the ship to the shore, to the clean and tidy wards of the hospital.

It was a sight which wrung tears from the eyes of those who did not often weep. The ship was a charnel-house. Death in its most horrible forms was there, — from starvation, from corruption, scurvy, lock-jaw, gangrene, consumption, and fever. How ghastly the scene! Men, once robust and strong, weak and helpless as babes, with hollow cheeks, toothless gums, thin pale lips, colorless flesh, sunken eyes, long, tangled hair, uncombed for many months, skeleton fingers with nails like eagles' claws, lying in rags upon the deck, — some, with strained eyes, looking up for the last time to the dear old flag which waved above them, for which they had fought, for which they had

starved, for which they were dying, gazing in rapture on its blessed folds, till their eyes were fixed in death, and the slowly-heaving heart stood still forever! They, and all their comrades, sleeping on a hundred battle-fields, and mouldering in the trenches at Andersonville, were the victims of Jefferson Davis and General Lee, whose names shall rot through all coming time.

There was work for the gentle-hearted nurses who stood waiting in the hospital wards, — work which required tenderest care; — removing the rags, washing the fevered skeletons, bathing the bleeding wounds where the sharp bones had pierced the skin; feeding them, — a crumb at a time; administering cordials drop by drop, to bring back with delicate nursing the receding tides of life.

With a bleeding heart, but yet with steady nerves, Azalia passed among them, doing her appointed work. There was one who was lying as if asleep, with his hands clasped upon his breast. His beard had been long uncut. His cheeks were wasted, his eyes sunken, but he had a manly brow. A strange fear and trembling crept over her, — a shuddering of the heart. Alarmed and frightened at she knew

not what, she brushed back the matted hair from his temples, and laid her hand upon his brow, cold and damp with the dews of death. The soldier opened his eyes, looked into her face, stared wildly around him, and tried to speak. It was but one word, and that a whisper, — her own name, "Azalia!"

A cry rang through the ward, startling the physicians and the nurses, and waking those who were asleep. She clasped him in her arms, fell upon his face, and kissed his wasted lips. "O Paul! Can it be that you are here?" she said.

The throbbing of her heart was like the fluttering of a frightened bird. Sweet, calm, and beautiful as the setting sun was the smile upon his face, and in his eyes the celestial light of Peace! They closed, and he lay again as if in slumber.

"They told me that you were dead," she said.

There was no reply; she laid her hand upon his heart, but could feel no beating there; touched her fingers to his fleshless wrist, but could find no throbbing of the pulse. The thin blood was receding from his colorless lips, — the tide was going out. "Doctor! Doctor! O come quick! Save him!" she cried.

The doctor came and gazed upon the face of Paul. "He is not quite gone," he said, then moistened his lips with brandy. There was a quickening of the pulse. 'If he rallies from this, we may save him," he said.

They wrapped him in warm flannels, rubbed his fleshless limbs, and gave him cordials, drop by drop. How long the hours, — the weary hours of hope and fear, — of expectation and distress, — while the faltering spirit, as if tired of earth, was but fluttering awhile along the shore of Time before taking its returnless flight over the dark and silent river to another land! Through the night Azalia sat by his side, watching him with sleepless eyes, fanning his pale brow. The morning sun beamed upon her still sitting there. Those who were accustomed to watch for her appearance in the early morning, restless with fever, beheld her as clothed with celestial brightness, and said one to another, "There sits our Angel of Light!"

Through the day she was there, watching the slow heavings of his heart, holding her breath while listening to assure herself that he was still breathing; hoping and fearing, holding her hands at times upon her own heart to still its wild, tumultuous beating, —

giving him atom by atom the needful nourishment, — bending over him to smooth his pillow, — opening the casement for the winds to blow upon his bloodless cheek, — thus snatching him from the very jaws of death and winning him back to life!

CHAPTER XXIV

HOME.

A DESPATCH came clicking into the telegraph office in New Hope that Paul Parker was alive, — that he had been a prisoner at Andersonville, was very feeble, but in a fair way to get well, and would soon be at home. It was from Azalia. Mr. Magnet read it in amazement, then ran as fast as he could to carry it to the little old cottage. "Good news!" he shouted, rushing into the house out of breath, without knocking. "Paul is alive! Paul is alive!"

"My son alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Parker, her heart leaping wildly.

"Yes; there is the despatch."

She read it in fear and trembling, her brain in a whirl. She must fly to him! O if she only had wings! Paul alive! The old clock took up the word, "Alive, — alive, — alive," it said. A robin perched in the great maple sang all day, "He is coming home, — is coming home," while the swal

lows from their nests under the eaves looked into the old kitchen through the open door, twittering together, as if saying, "How glad we are!" Never so bright the sunshine as on that morning, nor so fragrant the flowers! All nature was glad, and rejoiced in her joy.

Mr. Magnet told the news through the village, the people listening in wonder. Mr. Chrome threw down his paint-brush, took off his old hat, swung it over his head, and gave three cheers. Through the day he kept saying to himself, "That beats the Dutch!" The children ran through the streets shouting, "Paul is alive! Paul is alive!" Father Surplice, Judge Adams, Colonel Dare, and the neighbors — a dozen at a time — went down to shake hands with Paul's mother, making it such a day of gladness as never was known before in New Hope.

Impatiently they waited for the day when Paul would be with them again.

"We will let him know that we have not forgotten him," said Colonel Dare; "but it is little that we can do for one who has suffered so much."

So also said Judge Adams, and Mr. Capias, and all the people.

The day came at last. He was on board the train, feeble and weak, but Azalia was by his side, supporting his weary head, — sustaining him when his strength was gone. All New Hope was at the depot to receive him, looking with eager eyes down the level track to see the approaching train when it rounded the distant curve.

"It is coming! There it is!" shouted the boys. They loved him, their dear old teacher. The train stopped, and the conductor came out with Paul leaning on his arm, Azalia following. The people were going to hurrah, but when they saw how poor, pale, and emaciated he was, how thin his cheeks, how hollow and sunken his eyes, how languid and weary, how little there was left of one who once was so manly, they held their breaths, and felt a strange choking in their throats.

Blessed the meeting of mother and son! He had come back from the grave. He was even then almost a corpse, but he was alive! She had no words to utter; her joy was silent and deep. She could only clasp him in her arms, fold him to her heart, and, looking up to heaven, with streaming eyes, give silent thanks to God.

The people bowed their heads and stood in silent reverence. Colonel Dare came with his carriage. Mr. Chrome took Paul in his arms, and lifted him into it as if he was but a child. The people came one after another and touched his hands. The children brought flowers and laid them in his arms. They all had words of welcome for Azalia. She had saved him. "God bless you, darling!" said her father, kissing her cheeks, still round and fair, though watching, anxiety, care, and sorrow had robbed them of the bright bloom of other days.

"The Lord sent you in the way, as he sent Joseph into Egypt," said Father Surplice.

Deep, tender, and hearty the love of friends! Daphne came with choicest delicacies. How pleasant to hear her voice! How cheery her laugh! Mr. Noggin brought a box of his best honey. Mr. Chrome, who loved to hunt and fish, brought quails and pigeons. Even Miss Dobb sent up to know if there was not something that she could get for him. The birds came, the robins and swallows, singing and twittering and brimming over with joy.

How enchanting the music which came swelling up the valley from the water by the mill, from the

woods beyond the river, from the crickets in the fields, from the church-bell, blending with the night airs, and filling his soul with peace! But more blessed than everything else on earth was the holy light which beamed upon him from Azalia's eyes, which went down deep into his soul.

"You have always been my angel of light and goodness, and nothing but death shall part us," he said, as she sat by his side.

"I am glad if I have helped you, Paul," she said, laying her soft hand upon his brow, and kissing his lips. Pure and true the love which had deepened through many years, which had beamed from each other's eyes, but which till then had never been spoken. Like a brook gushing from springs in distant mountains, so, far back in childhood, had been the beginning of their affection, and now it was a river.

Day by day his strength returned, the flesh came again upon his wasted limbs, and health bloomed upon his cheeks. Then they walked together in the garden, talking of the dear old times, and looking onward to a future more golden than the sunniest day of all the past.

Beautiful and pleasant shall be the coming years to them! With smiling friends around them, living not for themselves, but to make the world better, to relieve suffering and sorrow, to help those who have been maimed and wounded while fighting for the old flag, they shall receive every day the richest rewards of life, — joy, happiness, contentment, peace, the blessing of God, the thanks of the poor, and the best wishes of all the "Young Folks" in the land.

THE END.

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